

Alice Lorange: Autistic Magical Girl

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Alice Lorange: Autistic Magical Girl

by [MiaQc](#)

Summary

I am Alice Lorange.

I am not a teenager like the Others.

Yes, I did say Others, with a big O.

In this world, there is the Others and me.

After having a demented nightmare, I am now in a strange house.

In the heart of the Unknown.

The Unknown... The Others...

Being autistic is not easy!

My attempt to write a book by mixing several of my stories together. As my attempts to live financially from this work ended in failure, here it is on Archive of Our Own.

- A translation of [Alice Lorange: Magical Girl Autiste](#) by [MiaQc](#)

CHAPTER 1: Pain ~ School Chaos

Although this story doesn't contain explicit content, it does talk about mature issues, such as bullying, rape, suicide. There is also a mention of drugs and strong swear words.

I am standing in a hallway. *Hallway. School. Hallway.* My thoughts get jumbled and my brain seems to have a hard time focusing. *Hallway. School. Hallway. School. Hallway. Where? At home? Safe?* I shake my head vigorously to “replace myself back into Reality.” *Come on, get a grip, Alice! You are...* My name is Alice and I am standing in one of my school’s hallways. *That’s better!* I said to myself, relieved. By the way, because this is important for me, I am a Quebecer, I am 16 years old, and I am in Secondary 5. [1]

I wait for the start of my next class while looking at my watch. *Ten minutes... ten more minutes and...* Then my thoughts were distracted by something. Sounds. Noises. Students talking to each other. Students walking by me. Way too close to me. *No, no, NO!* Suddenly, the panic comes to me and my brain cries out, “danger, danger, danger!” *Don’t listen to it, Alice! Just do as usual. Think about something happy.* But, at this moment, I am unable to think about anything.

Suddenly, I heard them. The Voices. The Others’ Voices.

“You’re weird, Alice,” says a male teenager’s voice.

“No, she’s a fucking crazy, slutty girl!” violently retorts the high-pitched voice of a female student.

“Do you really believe that?” asks a younger girl’s voice.

“Well, yeah! She’s not like us.”

“I don’t see the relevance...,” says another teenage girl’s voice.

These voices. Are they real or imaginary? I can’t tell, but I can still hear them.

“‘Lorange’... what kind of a shitty name is that?” asks another voice, masculine and mocking.

“Uh...” said another female voice, hesitating a little, ‘l’orange’...? [2] Or maybe... ‘low range’?”

All the voices are laughing out loud. I refrain from crying. It hurts me so much. All of a sudden, the bell rings.

I breathe a sigh of relief and slowly make my way to my class, as usual. My footsteps seem to make a lot of noise. Yet I wear sneakers without laces. My heart seems to be pounding in my chest. My red hair, wavy and stopping at mid-back, rises with every step I take. My green eyes are fixed on their objective, whereas I would rather look at something else, like my clothes. A green long-sleeved sweater with jeans. My brain no longer screams “danger” to me, but I still hear them. The Others’ Voices. Their laughter. In my head. In my soul. Scarred forever by these imbeciles.

As soon as I enter the classroom, I sit at my desk, as usual. My teacher starts his lesson - it’s a math class - and I can’t keep up with him. I’ve always had trouble with mathematics, but there I felt like I was on another planet and had an alien as my teacher. *Oh dear! My poor head wants to burst!* Bursts with pain, as always. My beloved head enjoys sending me signals that quickly turn into pain with every problem in my unfortunate life. An Other is mocking me? Pain Points + 1. An Other mock me for a long time? Pain Points + 5. An Other wants to talk to me? Discomfort’s Activation, brain that screams “danger” and Pain Points + 1 per second. Any minor school problems? Pain Points + 5. A BIG school problem? Pain Points + 10! *I’ve always loved video games, so... What level would my Mental Endurance be? Uh... is it possible that it’s at 0?* My head makes me experience hardship. I feel waves of pain at regular intervals. *Yes, it must be at 0. Come on, Alice, wait until the class is over, and most importantly, don’t cry!* This is my number one rule. Never show weakness by crying, by being “too emotional, like a kindergarten brat,” otherwise the Others will do horrible and very, very painful things to me.

So, I wait for time to pass, while scribbling anything in my workbook. In spite of the protection of my sweater sleeves, my skin starts to tingle, to tremble, to “burn.” *Shoot! Just what I needed.* My skin, in addition to being a very pale white, is simply hypersensitive and the paper “burns” me. Cardboard too. After what seems like an eternity, my math class is coming to an end. *Finally... but the day is not over yet.* I sigh with discouragement.

At lunchtime, in the cafeteria, I eat alone, in my corner, as usual. *Interact with Others by sitting next to them? NEVER IN MY LIFE!* I tell myself in a firm tone. I barely feel the taste of my meal, as my other senses are assaulted by this racket. All the students chatting to each other, the sound of the food trays jostling, those who eat while

making noises... I had to leave quickly for the corridors' temporary tranquility. Then I have to do my afternoon classes. I was able to retain a few things in my English class, [3] but the rest disappeared into a gaping black hole. *It's not surprising, my brain is heating up!*

When my school day was (finally!) over, I walked home. I live in a small town in Quebec, with the rather peculiar name of Six-Lumineal. I always follow the same path, without ever deviating from it, although there are others. Routine is what keeps me "alive" in this world. A chaotic and often incomprehensible world. *I don't understand the Human Society...*, I said to myself, in deep thoughts. *Why do we learn so much at school if certain subjects are never used later in life? Why does it seem so complicated to find a job? Going to interviews, waiting for an answer... I don't get it. And then why do we have to say "excuse me" when we walk by someone? It doesn't make sense.* Now my head is a little better, but I feel like it's not going to last.

As soon as I arrive in front of my house, or rather in front of my parents' house, I enter and hear a familiar voice.

"Hi, Alice."

My mother's voice, coming from the kitchen. Rayelle Lorange. Redhead, like me, but with shorter hair and dark blue eyes. I don't answer her because I don't see the purpose in doing so. I want to go to the living room when my mother is still talking to me.

"So, how was your day?"

That's a good question. *What am I going to answer her? Chaotic, painful, stupid? No.* I'm going to give her my pre-assembled answer that I've been giving her for ages.

"Fine, Rayelle."

An answer always said in a neutral tone. Without expressions. The simplicity of survival.

I go to the living room and I hear Rayelle sigh, as always. I'm not even surprised if she's about to leave the kitchen to go find me. That's what Rayelle does. Now we face each other, and I feel an uneasy tension in the air.

"Why?" Rayelle simply said to me.

"Why... what?" I ask her.

I cannot decipher her words.

“Why don’t you call me mom?”

I sigh with discouragement. *This discussion again. How many times will we have to do it over and over?*

“Because it’s not right,” I replied. “Your first name is Rayelle.”

“Yes, but I am your mother! You always talk to me as if I were a stranger...”

Suddenly, my father’s voice, a brown-haired man bearing the full name of Shawn Mabis, can be heard from afar.

“Come on, what’s the matter again?”

“Don’t interfere, you!” retorts his wife.

“I have to be polite,” I continued. “You are...”

“Then quit being so formal all the time, and is it so hard to call me mom?”

Usually, to put an end to these absurdities, I say “no” followed by “Rayelle”, but this time I try something else.

“Uh... yes...?”

The tension in the air seems to want to suffocate me. I feel Rayelle will burst with anger. I know very well what will happen next. As usual, my mother will scream.

“WHY, WHY, WHY?”

Then she’s going to ask me why I’m not like everybody else.

“Why don’t you behave like everyone else? Like a normal teenage girl?”

Yet the “normal” teenage girls I know only think about partying and boys. I even know a girl who bragged that she slept with an older boy when she was 14. *At the age of 14!!! Can you believe it? This world is insane!* Finally, Rayelle orders me to go to my room, in a harsh and hurtful tone. As always, I obey her.

Despite my new answer, nothing has changed. This conversation

always ends the same way. Rayelle in a dark anger. Shawn who must go and calm her down as best he can. I, Alice Lorange, in my room, in my Safety Zone, with the pain that wishes to come back to my head. *Unless it is already there? I can't figure it out anymore. Oh! Dear pain, like the Others, you never leave me alone.* Although they are my parents, Rayelle and Shawn are Others.

They are not like me. They are not autistic, and that makes me feel ashamed. After all, if they were like me, they wouldn't cause me so many worries. Sadness. Pain.

[1] The equivalent of the USA's 11th grade (school).

[2] It means “gold angel”.

[3] As a secondary language. Alice's mother tongue is Quebec French.

CHAPTER 2: Insanity ~ Demented Nightmare

In my room, I try to calm this unpleasant sensation (a beginning of pain?) that I have at my head. Since thinking about it doesn't help, I thought about distracting myself, but how? By doing my homework? No, it's still touching paper, and I don't feel like doing it. By playing a video game on my home computer, an old used model I got from Shawn? No. Anyway, it lags a lot these days. *What else could I do?* Suddenly, it hits me. An intense pain point in my head, as if a metal bar had been thrust into my skull. *Oh my, but that hurts!* Being unable to stay up any longer, I will lie down on my bed. It feels great, but I know that the war is not yet won.

Although I am in my Safety Zone, far from the Others and the Unknown, I need more to make this pain stop. I have to disconnect from everything. From Reality itself. Anyway, I need to sleep. Without taking the time to put myself in pajamas, it is too early to be in sleepwear anyway, I put myself under the covers and close my eyes.

I try to fall asleep. *No! There is too much light!* I get up quickly, pull the curtains from my little window, close the lights, and go back to bed. *Well, now it's going to work!* I thought to myself, very happy. I close my eyes again. It takes a while, but I fall asleep and the pain point is exterminated.

I suddenly find myself on a road that seems to be endless. A thick fog is present. *It is... one of the Unknown's forms.* What is the Unknown? It's many things. To put it simply, the Unknown is anything new, unusual and dangerous. *If it thinks it scares me...!* I thought that to reassure myself, but the Unknown always causes me problems. I start walking, without knowing where to go, because I can barely see in front of me. Suddenly I hear a terrifying growl. I slowly turn around on myself, but I can't see anyone in the fog. So, I keep walking. The growl can be heard again. It seems to be close. Then I turn around sharply to face the menacing shadow of a bright-eyed creature. *What is...? Is it a ghost, a werewolf, a demon? It doesn't matter. I have to run away!*

I flee without further delay. I run, again and again, in the fog. Suddenly, my body is surrounded by light. The light explodes and my clothes are gone. All I have left is my bra, panties and stockings. Even so, I keep running. Suddenly, a tight white and dark green sleeveless top appears, hiding my bra. Then, a light green mini skirt materializes,

with dark shorts underneath, hiding my panties. Afterwards, short white gloves appeared, hiding my hands, followed by small green boots, covering my stockings. Finally, a big pale green ribbon emerged on my chest, as well as long thin ribbons on the back of my new outfit. It's a magical girl's [4] uniform. I don't have any accessories in my hair. Also no jewelry.

I have never felt so exposed in my entire life. Normally, my skin would "burn" me, looking for fabric protection, but I am far too focused on running to feel anything. I still run when I realize that my steps don't make the same sound as before. I left the road and ran on grass and then on a winding path. *I must be in a forest. If only this damn fog would disappear!* Suddenly, I see what appears to be a house in the distance. As the bright-eyed creature is still chasing me, I think that hiding in the residence would be a great idea.

I arrive in front of the house. I try to open the front door, but it is locked. *No, no, no!* I exclaimed, in panic. I then try to open the windows that are within my reach. They refuse to open. *NOOOOOOOOOOO!* I shouted, in despair. Without further ado, the threatening shadow of the creature arrives, and I am forced to turn around to face it. Against all my expectations, the shadow, instead of pouncing on me to kill me, turns into a teenage girl. A student with short black hair that I know only too well.

"Mel... Melane Fauchon?"

Melane. Among all the Others, she's the one who causes me the most trouble, and pain, at school. *What is she doing there, in my dream?* I ask myself, surprised. *Although if it's a nightmare, it makes sense that she's there, but, dream or nightmare, I should be able to wake up, right?* No matter how hard I concentrate, I can't wake up. Melane remains silent. Her coffee-brown gaze is always on me. I don't like that at all.

"What are you doing here?" I asked Melane.

"Alice..."

The rest of her words makes my blood run cold.

"Why do you want to gouge out my eyes, pull out my nails, burn my hair, and then turn my heart to pulp?"

"Wh-What? Why would I want to kill y...?"

I suddenly fell silent and the desire to kill Melane came to my

mind. *I... I aM...*, I started to think despite myself.

“It’s quite simple.” answered the student with the short black hair.

“You already have blood on you...”

My magical girl uniform is getting stained with blood. *I wAnT... tO...*

“...and you still want more! So, what are you waiting for? You do have a knife, don’t you?”

Yes, I have a knife. Held by my left hand. It wasn’t there before. It just appeared in my hand. *I WaNt tO KiLl yOu, hoLy fUckInG OtHeR!!!* As if possessed by a murderous rage, I utter a bestial cry, before pouncing on Melane to stab her. Again. And again. And again! *AnD aGaiN!!!*

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha! I’m laughing in my head, while also laughing out loud. *If it’s a dream, it’s awe-some!* Without wasting time, I disfigure Melane, while making her eyes pop out of her eye sockets, and I intend to tear out her nails. *Who will be next, eh? My foolish parents, my stupid teachers, the crazy lady from the supermarket...*? Suddenly, the fog rises, and everything breaks around me, like mirror fragments. My strange insanity disappears, as well as the bloody knife. When I see Melane’s corpse and the blood on me, I scream in terror, before falling into a dark and endless abyss.

I cry out when I wake up. *What a nightmare!* I’ve never done one so awful. Besides, it’s like I lost control of myself. *Me, killing someone like that? Impossible!* I get up and something is wrong. The walls are orange. The ones in my room are pale blue. The bed is old, with a wooden head and footboard. Mine is modern, with a metal head and footboard. No trace of my computer, my homework, my wardrobe.

In panic, I call Rayelle and Shawn. No answer. My parents aren’t there. I’m not in my room anymore. I’m not at home. I am in the heart of the Unknown. While holding back from actually screaming, I am yelling in my mind.

[4] Magical girls are often young girls who can transform to fight the forces of evil. Among the famous magical girls is Sailor Moon, created by the mangaka (manga author) Naoko Takeuchi.

CHAPTER 3: House ~ Exploration

My body starts shaking, my head wants to burst with pain again, tears come to my eyes. I have only one urge, to cry. *Don't panic, Alice! You can do VERY WELL on your own! You have... You just have to... explore the place. Yes, that's it!* My words "restore" my mental state. My head pain goes down a notch, my body doesn't shake anymore. As for tears, my eyes no longer produce them. I wipe away the ones that have flowed and then my exploration begins.

I start by looking carefully at the room with the orange walls. Apart from what I have already seen, there is a small table with an extinguished candle in a pillar-shaped candle holder, matches, and, strangely enough, bandages. Then, I leave the room. I find myself in a long corridor with five doors. The one I just used has my first name engraved on it and an orange circle. Three other doors also have the first name "Alice," but their circles are of a different color: yellow, brown and black. The last door simply has the word "bathroom." Curious, I'm going to look at the corridor's east end. I find a hatch leading to the attic. Then I go to the west end. There are stairs going down to the ground floor.

I go back to see the "Alice" doors. *Should I open one? Why not?* I try to open the one with a yellow circle when the pain comes to my right hand. I pull my hand quickly away from the handle and it bleeds. A small blade had come out of the handle to hurt my palm. Still in a state of shock, I watch the blade go back into the handle. *Oh, my goodness! A trapped handle! Are the others trapped too?* Despite my injury, I try to open the door with a brown circle, then the one with a black circle, and my hand is again injured by the handles' blades. *All right. I conclude that I am only allowed to enter the orange room... and the bathroom, no doubt. The bandages that I saw are used in case of an accident with the doors.*"

I go back to the orange room to bandage my injured hand. After doing this, I am surprised to see more bandages appear as if by magic. *How is this possible? It is... It is not logical.* Wanting to avoid panicking, and bringing pain to my head, I leave the room to go to the attic. In the attic, holy moly, all this mess! Boxes stacked everywhere. Books on the floor. Broken dishes. A good layer of dust on everything. Cobwebs here and there... My body starts shaking like a leaf. My skin, hypersensitive, "burns" me. *NNNNNOOOO!* I yelled, in spite of myself. *I have to get out of here as soon as possible!* I'm leaving the attic

running.

Back in the corridor with the “Alice” doors, I go to the bathroom and, as I had deduced, I can enter without the handle hurting my hand. Unlike the orange bedroom, and the rest of the house which seems old, the bathroom is modern. There is a bath with a shower head, a sink with hot and cold water, a mirror, but no light bulb for light. Only sunlight illuminates the room. Without wasting time, I sprinkle my face with cold water to “recover” from the attic shock. Then I look at myself in the mirror. I’ve always hated looking in the mirror. I don’t see the point. Besides, I always find myself ugly and ridiculous. *Geez, you look like a girl on crack!* I sigh and then I leave the bathroom to go downstairs.

On the ground floor, I discover several things. A door leading to basement stairs. An almost empty living room because it has only one large armchair. No television. A very modern kitchen. Everything is there. Fridge, oven, microwave oven, toaster, rice cooker, etc. A small dining room, with a table and four chairs, then a lobby. In the lobby, thinking I could get out of here, I try to open the front door. Suddenly, a strange magic symbol appears. It pushes me away, making me fall on the floor, then it disappears. This symbol is a large circle containing a six-pointed star, a crescent moon and a small sun in the middle of the star, as well as other unknown symbols. Refusing to give up, I get up and try to open the door again. The magic symbol pushes me away again. *Come on, Alice! Don’t panic!* I feel my head getting heavy. The pain wants to come back to me. *There must be another way out somewhere...*, I thought, trying to reassure myself.

So I go back to the living room to try to open a window. I can’t do it. It’s as if an invisible force is keeping it closed. I then go to the kitchen, because there is also a window there, to open it, but it too refuses to move. *No...*, I said to myself, sadly. I try to open all the other windows I can find on the ground floor. None of them want to open. *No, no, NO!* I said to myself, wanting to panic. *But wait... you haven’t looked at the basement yet!* Putting all my hopes on it, I go to the basement. I find myself in a large open room with white walls. No door, no exit.

That’s when I understood that I am the house’s prisoner. There is no way out and I am still in the Unknown’s heart. *NOOOOOOOOOOO!* I don’t hold back. I cry my eyes out while screaming. While I’m yelling, my bandage comes undone and it falls to the ground. It is then that I notice that my right hand is healed, as if by magic, which shut me up. *H...How?* I wipe away my tears and force myself to stop crying. *How is that possible? Where am I? Whose house is this?* One

thing's for sure, I'm going to find out sooner or later.

CHAPTER 4: Encounters ~ The Other Alice

I slowly go back up to the ground floor, then I hear a voice. A female voice. It comes from the kitchen. *Awesome! I'm not alone!* I tell myself happily. *But why haven't I met this person before?* I go to the kitchen and I see a young blonde teenager with small blue eyes. Her honey-colored hair is tied up in a long braid. The teenage blonde girl wears sportswear. A thick hooded sweater. Training pants. All in fluorescent pink. *Yikes!* I thought to myself, disgusted. *How ugly!* Not her clothes, the color.

“Uh... hello?”

The blonde girl answers me, but I don't understand her.

“О, привет! Ты ведь новая Элис, не так ли?” [5]

“I am sorry, but I don't speak Russian.”

I only know French and some English.

“Простите,” [6] the unknown teenager tells me. “It goes haywire sometimes. You're a new Alice, aren't you? I've never seen you before.”

“Yes... well... I heard Russian...”

“Of course. The automatic translation. It doesn't work 100% all the time. My name is Alice Demidova. D for short, and you are Alice... who?”

“Alice Lorange, but...”

“Cool! ‘Lorange’... that's French, isn't it?”

I told her “yes” and I want to talk more when D interrupts me.

“I am from Russia, but you must have guessed it. Хотел бы я чтобы мой английский был лучше.” [7]

“I'm sorry?”

“I hate it when it does that! Anyway, did you meet the other Alice?”

I then feel completely lost. *Other Alice, here?* I answer “no” to D

because I thought I was alone in this strange house.

“Ah... so you haven’t ‘Shifted’ yet, then.”

The blonde Alice then explains to me what she means by “Shifted.” An unexplained phenomenon of the mysterious house. The “Shift” separates the Alice, putting them in their own dimensions, their own spaces, while remaining the house’s prisoners. They can only rarely meet each other.

“I must have ‘Shifted’ in your space,” concludes Alice D.

I tell her that I don’t understand what she just explained to me.

“Don’t worry. You’ll get used to it quickly. The ‘Shift’ and the automatic languages’ translation, two strange phenomena. There are more. For example, day and night arrive randomly and their duration is never the same. A piece of advice: stay in your ‘Alice’ room during the night.”

Surprised, I ask her why. The Russian Alice tells me that strange things happen at night. There are odd noises and so it is better to stay in her room.

“O...k...”, I said to her, “uh... Alice?”

“Call me D. It’s easier that way. Me, I will call you Lorange.”

“All right.”

The blonde Alice then tells me about the other two Alice. They are Alice Brown and Alice Kurosawa [8]. Brown is American, Kurosawa is Japanese. Then D asks me my age. I tell her that I am 16 years old.

“Why this question?” I asked the Russian Alice.

“To find out. I am 14 years old. Brown is 10. Kurosawa 20.”

Then Alice D turns to the fridge. She tells me she is hungry, plus a few words in Russian. Suddenly, there were sparks around the young teenage girl with blonde hair and, in a flash of light, she disappeared! I am now alone in the kitchen. *She must have “Shifted”... What do I do now? Should I find the other Alice, if they are in the same dimension as me?* Of course, I must. It’s logic itself. Even if they are Others. So, I go in their search.

I’m going to check the living room. Nobody. In the basement. Same

thing. I go back up to the ground floor, then sparks appear around me. I see a flash of light and I'm still in the same place. *I must have "Shifted". I find that freaky.* I go up to the first floor, to the corridor with the "Alice" rooms, then the door with the brown circle opens. Then I see a little girl, aged 10, with black skin, long brown hair and hazelnut eyes. She must be Alice Brown. Brown is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and sports pants. I say hello to her.

"Hi!" The little girl answers me. "Are you the new Alice, the one with the orange room?"

"Yes."

"Awesome! It's nice to meet someone new." [9]

Hearing English, I say a "uh" of hesitation.

"What is it? [10] Oh, the translation failed again. It's annoying when that happens."

I remain silent and Brown asks me if I have met Kurosawa. I tell her, "not yet."

"I saw her go into her room. Feel free to knock on her door."

Then, without her wanting this, the Alice brunette "Shift" as well. I am alone again. *Well, all I must do now is knock on the door with the red circle.*

I go knock and a 20-year-old woman, wearing a red and black kimono, opens the door. Alice Kurosawa. Her black hair is tied in a bun.

"ここにちは。 [11]" she says. "You are the Fourth Alice. I am delighted to make your acquaintance."

"The 'Fourth Alice'?"

"Yes, because you are the fourth to have arrived in this strange house."

I then ask her which Alice she is. The first, the second, the third?

"I am the First Alice, D is the Second, Brown is the Third."

I wonder why she is wearing a kimono but I don't dare to ask her. Kurosawa seems to read my mind because she answers me quickly.

“Oh, これが [12] ? I had rented it for a special occasion.”

For an Other she seems friendly. Just like Brown and D, by the way. But I still have to be careful. I don't want to be “attacked, hurt” by volatile words.

I then ask Kurosawa if she has ever tried to leave the house.

“Oh yes! I tried to open the windows. They wouldn't move, so I thought I could break the glass. They're unbreakable. So, I moved on to plan B: breaking down a wall. It ended in failure. Fortunately, I had a Plan C: destroy the big magic circle at the front door with a mixture of salt and dried herbs. That didn't work. I tried everything. We are prisoners!”

I tell her the fact of being prisoners is horrible, then I ask the Japanese Alice who may well have locked us in this house.

“I don't know. We don't run out of water or food because the kitchen fridge always fills up, as if by magic. But still...”

Suddenly, everything seems to get darker and darker. The Alice with black hair becomes tense. I ask her what's going on.

“The night is coming. Quick, into the room!”

Kurosawa locks herself in the room “Alice” at the door with the red circle. I don't know where the other Alice are. Without further ado, I go to my room, the one at the door with the orange circle. Having nothing else to do, I go to bed. The sheets on the bed are not comfortable. Despite everything, I manage to fall asleep.

[5] “Oh, hey! You're the new Alice, aren't you?”

[6] “Sorry”

[7] “I wish my English was better.”

[8] Means “black marsh”.

[9] Text in English in the original French version.

[10] Text in English in the original French version.

[11] “Hello.”

[12] “This?”

CHAPTER 5: Autism ~ Revelations

I have another strange dream. I find myself in the corridor, but the “Alice” doors have disappeared. In their places, there is a “Emilie” door, an “Emilee” door, an “Emiri” door and an “Emily” door. It is daylight. A little blonde girl, wearing a black dress, goes out through the “Emily” door. Then, a red-headed lady, wearing a skirt and a white shirt, goes out by the “Emilie” door.

“Is everything okay?” asks Emilie to Emily.

“Yes, what about you?”

The woman and the little girl don’t see me. It is as if I am invisible.

“Yes,” replied Emilie. “I didn’t see any other Traces last night.”

“All the better! They are difficult to escape from. I haven’t seen Emilee and Emiri. I hope they are all right.”

“They must have ‘Shifted.’ This is happening more and more often.”

“If only we could control the ‘Shift’... We would always be together!”

“That would be great, but...”

Suddenly, everything becomes dark. Emily says night is coming and Emilie says they must go back to their rooms right away. The woman and the little girl go to their rooms and then everything turns completely black. I can’t see anything anymore.

Suddenly I hear a door open. I can’t see who is coming out, among the Emilie, but the person is carrying a candle with a green flame. This person moves slowly towards the stairs for the ground floor and I follow her. On the ground floor, the stranger goes to the kitchen. Suddenly, I feel a big shiver and the candle holder is attacked by a ghostly creature. *Is it a Trace?* It is, without a doubt. I wake up at the same time.

I learned four things:

1. There were other prisoners before us, the four Alice. They must be dead by now.
2. This house is haunted by ghostly creatures. Their names are Traces, I’m sure.

3. The Traces only manifest themselves during the night and they cannot go into the “Alice” rooms.
4. If we can control the “Shift,” we would always be together.

I can't wait to share my discoveries with the other Alice.

I leave the room with the orange walls and go to the kitchen. I am surprised to see D, Brown and Kurosawa together. They couldn't agree on what to eat.

“Excuse me,” I said to speak to them.

“Oh, hello to you, Lorange.” Kurosawa answered me. “As you can see, we are in the middle of an argument.”

“For a stupid reason!” exclaims D. “We can eat whatever we want, but Kurosawa insists that we eat the same thing!”

“Not at all!” retorts the Japanese Alice. “I just said that it would be easier to make a big breakfast for everyone.”

D whispers a “yeah, yeah, whatever.” She looks pretty upset. Brown says she doesn't care about the argument because she's hungry. I tell her I'm not hungry, then I tell the three Alice that I need to talk to them about something important. The Russian Alice asks me what it is about. I tell them about my strange dream, with the Emilie.

The blonde Alice then says that she also had a weird dream. In this dream, there were four Marie - Mary, Marie, Mari and Maree - and no mention of the “Traces.” After that, the brunette Alice speaks. She says that she also had a strange dream. In her dream, there were four Layla - Laila, Layla, Lailah and Laylah - and one of them died after being possessed by something. As Brown woke up afterwards, she does not know the fate of the other three girls.

“These are our predecessors.” said Kurosawa, sadly. “They are all dead...”

“If we don't do anything,” I replied, “we'll be next!”

The other Alice agrees with me. Brown then asks what they can do, since they can't leave the house.

“We need...” I began, before I shut up.

How do I manage to show so much courage, emotion and leadership

in front of the Others? *It's not logical.* Yet, I keep talking.

“We need to find additional information. The front door’s magic symbol must somehow be destroyed and there must be a way to control the ‘Shift’.”

D tells me then that the three Alice has already looked everywhere. I ask her if she is sure of that.

“We’ve been here for a long time.” explains the Japanese Alice. “We have searched everywhere...”

“Uh, actually, no.” Brown interrupted her. “No one’s been in the attic.”

Everyone is silent. The attic. The mess. The dust. *NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!* The little brown-haired girl decides to talk. She says she doesn’t want to go to the attic. D and Kurosawa, for their part, merely nod their heads in approval. I ask why to the group. After all, they are Others. The Others can go wherever they want without worries.

“Because...” begins Brown, before she stops talking.

The Russian Alice then speaks.

“It’s a mess up there, and there’s paper.”

The paper? There’s a trigger in my mind. *Would they be like me? No, that’s impossible!*

“Does the paper bother you?” I asked D.

“Yes, no... uh...”

Kurosawa says then, bluntly, that they don’t want to go to the attic, period.

“So... it’s true...,” I said, giving up to the obvious.

“*What? I don’t understand.* [13] What is true?” asks the American Alice.

The automatic language translation continues to break down from time to time.

“You are... like me,” I explained to the Alice.

“Что [14]?” asks D.

“私には理解できません。[15]”, says Kurosawa.

“You are not Others,” I say. “You are autistic, like me!”

Brown hesitates, then she tells me she’s autistic. She thought it was “obvious,” as if it was possible to tell only by looking at her. D retorts by telling me I’m wrong. Kurosawa was going to say, in turn, that she is not autistic, but “normal,” when I raise my voice. I yell.

“NO DENIAL WITH ME!”

I didn’t realize it. A great anger is growing inside me. I scream more and more.

“IF THERE’S ONE THING I HATE MORE THAN THE OTHERS AND THE UNKNOWN, IT IS LIES!”

D, wanting me to calm down, tells me verbally that, yes, she is also autistic. Kurosawa, defending herself, says that she is not a liar, which makes me scream more.

“SO WHY DON’T YOU WANT TO GO TO THE ATTIC?”

Kurosawa, as her only argument, says sharply that she “has her reasons.”

“ALWAYS LAME EXCUSES.” I kept shouting. “YOU’RE A GOOD OTHERS’ MIMIC! IT’S A TOTAL DISGRACE!”

Suddenly, the Japanese Alice starts to cry. This makes my future screams stop. Kurosawa started mumbling things. A “life of shame,” her family’s reputation and several first names, probably female friends.

I feel very bad to see her in this state. I want to apologize when Kurosawa interrupted me.

“Do not apologize. It’s... It’s my fault, not yours.”

The woman with black hair forces herself to stop crying, as I myself had to do many times in my life. When Kurosawa succeeds, she says she would be ready to go to the attic.

“If we hurry,” she adds, “everything will be all right.”

However, D and Brown are not convinced. They still don't want to go. We take time to have breakfast in the dining room, even me who wasn't hungry, and then I ask D and Brown for their help again. The American Alice sighs, then she says, "yes, I will help."

"I don't have much choice, do I?" asks the blonde Alice, before sighing and saying, "yes."

After washing and tidying the dishes, we go up to the first floor. We go to the attic hatch when everything gets dark. Kurosawa says that night will come any minute.

"In that case," I said, "let's go to our rooms and come out with the candles.

"Are you sure?" D asks me. "It seems risky, with the Traces roaming around at night."

I tell her I don't want to wait. Neither does Brown.

"The sooner we finish in the attic," says the American Alice, "the better."

We will get the candles in our rooms. As soon as we get out of there, the night has arrived. Everything is black. Brown says she can barely see in front of her. Normal, because only the green glow of the candles illuminates us.

"It's too late to back down." says Kurosawa. "Let's go to the attic."

We go there, moving forward very slowly, and I hear noises. Moans. The Traces seem close. The creature must be watching us. D says to stay on our guard, and that's excellent advice.

[13] Text in English in the original French version.

[14] "What?"

[15] "I don't understand."

CHAPTER 6: Attic ~ Survival Oath

In the attic, D, Brown, Kurosawa and I start the search. As we can barely see ahead, we are not making any progress. Suddenly, D starts shouting “OUCH!”. Brown asks her if everything is okay.

“Yes,” said the blonde Alice, “but I bumped into something again!”

“It’s so dark.” said the black-haired Alice. “I can barely read what’s written in this book I found.”

“What is it about?” Brown asks her.

“Souls and an ‘affinity’ to an element of nature.”

Then the brown-haired Alice asks me if I’ve found something.

“No, I... AHHHHHHH!”

“LORANGE!!!” screams D, in panic.

“I touched a spider’s web!” I exclaimed. “It’s a horror for my skin!”

All of a sudden, I hear moaning again, as well as “ah, ah”. *The Traces must be close!* I try to get close to another Alice’s green flame when my body is thrown to the ground. Probably by a Trace. I utter a cry and I lose consciousness.

When I open my eyes, all I see is darkness. I am cold and unable to move. *Am I dead? If that’s what life after death is all about, it’s so lame!* Suddenly, a ghostly creature appears in front of me, but it doesn’t try to attack me. A Trace. *What does it want?* The Trace speaks to me, but I don’t understand its language, apart from the words “exit” and “oath.” *Do I have to swear an oath to get out... of the house? Then an oath of what? It’s too weird.* The Trace looks at me and I feel that I don’t have much time left to stay alive. *Well, what have I got to lose? Between that and dying...* I swear the oath, in my head since I cannot speak. *I swear an oath of... I-don’t-know-what. All right. Now, what to do?* The Trace clings to me and it seems to melt into my flesh. It hurts. I scream in my mind.

I open my eyes again. I am back in the attic. D, Brown and Kurosawa are there, but everything is different. I manage to see all around me, as if it is day, but night is still there. The other three Alice has a different outfit. They are all in magical girl’s uniforms. They are

identical in every way except for the colors. Red and white color for Kurosawa. Blue and white for D. Yellow and white for Brown. This reminds me of my nightmare with Melane. *I wore a green and white outfit*, I remembered. I take the time to look at myself and I, too, am in a magical girl's uniform. In green and white. *Unbelievable! It's exactly the same as in my nightmare with Melane. Is that supposed to make me feel better?*

Suddenly, I hear a voice in his head. The voice of the Trace from earlier, when I was paralyzed in the dark. The voice is feminine, so all Traces are female creatures. Her words resonate in me like faint echoes. As I have accepted a “Survival Oath,” I share my body with the Trace and have access to magical powers, by transforming into a magical girl. Unlike the other Traces, nocturnal, predatory and soul-eating human creatures, she and her three friends are “anomalies” because they have emotions and understand good and evil. As this Trace doesn't have a name, I gave her the name Heather because it's the first name that comes to mind when I think of the “Silent Hill” video games [16].

Heather and her friends tried to help other prisoners before us, but they failed because possessing other bodies without an oath is fatal to the souls of those same bodies. As the other three Alice and I took an oath, these conscious Traces can safely reside in our bodies without danger.

Heather also explains to me the Traces' origin. They come from a dark dimension where all sorts of evil creatures live together. They feed on human souls by summoning them in their dimension. However, the owner of this house, Adelan Alarie, summoned them to resurrect his wife, Alya Vaudrot, and his two children, Amandine and Anicet, who died in a plane crash. Not only the Traces don't have this power, but they took advantage of this to kill him and invade his city. Before he died, Adelan sealed his city and his home in another dimension with a powerful spell. This prevented the Traces from devouring the souls of the neighboring towns' inhabitants, but it did not prevent them from summoning other humans to kill them. Always in groups of four, always with the same first name. The house, transformed into a magical “Domain,” decided these rules. It is also thanks to the “Domain” that the languages are translated automatically, that the “Alice” doors are trapped, and the wounds bandaged by bandages found in a room heal quickly.

Heather also explains to me that the magic symbol at the entrance serves as “protection” against the Traces being in town, but that it does not prevent those already in the house from summoning and killing innocent people.

< A rubbish protection! > I exclaimed mentally.

< I agree with you, but my friends and I can destroy it. > Heather replied.

That's when I realized that Heather and I can communicate through thought.

< GREAT! > I said, quite happy. *< But, uh, how do we understand each other? Thanks to the Domain? >*

< No, but sharing a body also means sharing knowledge. >

< So, do I speak your language? >

Heather mentally tells me it's quite the opposite. She speaks my language, Quebec French.

< I see. > I said, in deep reflection.

I then ask aloud if the other Alice are okay.

“Yes. Well, I think so.” says D. “I finished speaking with Rosa.”

I ask her who is Rosa.

“Rosa [17] is my partner Trace. Brown has Elise [18] and Kurosawa has Aya [19].

“Absolutely,” says Kurosawa.

“Did they tell you that the magic symbol of the front door can be destroyed?” I asked afterwards.

“Yes,” Brown replied. “But it's only one step before we can return to Earth.”

The blonde Alice then says that magical crystals must be destroyed.

“Really? That's it?” I said, surprised. “Let's go, then.”

The Russian Alice then starts shouting.

“NOT NOW!”

I was going to ask her why she screams like that when a group of Traces arrive.

“We have to take care of them first!” exclaims D. “Электрифицирующая вода! [20]”

Electrified water suddenly falls on a Trace. Defeated, she disappears.

“Me, me!” says Brown, smiling. “POWER OF THE EARTH, GO! [21]”

An earth stalactite cuts a Trace in half. Her remains vanish into thin air.

“It’s my turn.” says Kurosawa. “荒れ狂う炎! [22]”

A Trace is carbonized by a big flame and she disappears.

“Why are the attacks in your languages? Is the automatic translation breaking down?” I ask myself aloud. “Ah, whatever. BRISE COUPANTE!!! [23]”

The remaining Traces are cut into small pieces by a strong magic breeze.

< Victory for us! > I exclaimed to Heather. < I almost feel like screaming “Fatality” [24], even if the Traces don’t leave any blood behind! >

< “Fatality”? Why? >

< Ah, never mind. >

How did I know that my magical powers are from the wind element? I don’t know. It just came to me. According to Heather, it is due to my soul’s affinity. The book Kurosawa found was true. Souls have an affinity for the elements of nature. Mine is of wind affinity, so while the Traces have control of the darkness, we, the Alice, have the affinity of our souls as magical power. Heather also explains to me that there are other magical oaths other than the survival oath. Without further ado, D, Brown, Kurosawa and I go downstairs to the ground floor. Other Traces try to kill us, but we massacre them with our magic. Moreover, we have not “Shifted” since the Traces have been in us. We are in control now.

[16] The character of Heather Mason in Silent Hill 3.

[17] D was also inspired by a video game character to name her Trace. Rosa from Final Fantasy IV.

[18] Brown did the same thing, with Elise from the video game Fire Emblem Fates.

[19] Kurosawa too, with Aya Brea, from the video game Parasite Eve.

[20] “Electrifying Water!”

[21] Text in English in the original French version.

[22] “Raging Fire!”

[23] “CUTTING BREEZE!!!”

[24] Reference to Mortal Kombat video games.

CHAPTER 7: Quest ~ Crystals Destruction

On the ground floor, we go to the lobby for the front door. I ask Brown how to get rid of the magic symbol, since Heather only told me that she and her Traces friends can destroy it.

“It’s true,” replied the brunette Alice. “but we can do it for them, due to our bodies’ sharing. Just reach out your hand to the door and say, ‘Seal Release.’”

We reach out our hands to the door and, in our respective languages, repeat the magic words.

“Libération du Sceau!”

“Seal Release!”

“Освободить печать!”

“シールを解除する!”

Colored magical rays spring from our hands and destroy the magical symbol. The large circle containing a six-pointed star, a crescent moon and a small sun in the middle of the star, as well as other unknown symbols, disappears. The front door opens and, without wasting a second, we run outside the house.

D, Brown, Kurosawa and I are now in a big ghost town. As it is still dark, a thick fog is present, and we feel that Traces are lurking. D explains to me that the city is also part of the “Domain.” The languages’ automatic translation is still working. Brown then tells me that, in order to return to Earth, we must destroy magic crystals that are scattered all over the city. That’s what her Trace, Elise, told her. Kurosawa plans to leave on her own with Aya when I ask her to wait.

“Isn’t it better to go together?” I asked the Japanese woman. “Staying grouped?”

“Aya thinks that this will attract the Traces and that it’s better to be separated, but...”

“Okay, I understand.” I replied. “Let’s split up.”

This is how the search for the crystals to be destroyed begins.

With Heather's help, I avoid several Traces, while moving slowly in the fog, then I enter an abandoned store.

< Look, > I say mentally to Heather. < near the cash register. >

Near the cash register is a large purple crystal. Heather confirms to me that it's one of the magic crystals to be destroyed.

< So, is there a particular way to destroy it? > I asked the Trace.

< No. Any wind attack will do, unless you prefer me to execute a dark attack? >

< By controlling my body? No thanks. >

I breathe in a good shot before going on the offensive.

“SCIE AÉRIENNE!” [\[25\]](#)

A round saw blade, formed with cutting wind, will destroy the crystal by cutting it in half. It seems that all my attacks are based on two things: the wind element and my imagination.

Suddenly, I am teleported to a meadow in bloom. I ask Heather what's going on.

< Did the crystal have a defense system? Yet you destroyed it. >

Then I ask her where I am.

< I don't know, but I know it's not real. >

< Not real? > I said then. < Like in a dream? >

< Yes, but it is possible to die. > says the conscious Trace. < If it's part of a defense system, defeating the guardian of this place will set you free. >

I tell myself that it will be easy. Like in a video game. I take three steps forward when a redhead teenager appears in front of me. She is my lookalike. My double is in an Alice in Wonderland cosplay. In great anger, I ask Heather why the guardian is another me.

< Whatever! > The Trace replies to me. < She is not real, kill her! >

Her words give me a jolt. The other Alice Lorange then starts talking, but her voice is distorted and demonic.

“WhY, wHy, whY?”

“Why what?” I asked her.

< *Lorange, you must kill her!* >

“WhY dO ThE oTheRs ExIsT?”

The flowers of the meadow fade and the earth turns blood red.

“WhY dO YoU ExIsT?”

The other Alice Lorange cosplay becomes covered with blood and a knife appears in her hand. *It's like in my nightmare with Melane...*, I said to myself, *and that would be me, the evil Melane*. Heather, worried about my life, mentally screams out my last name.

“iF yOu WoUldN’t ExIsT, I woUld bE FrEe!!! No MoRe sUffEriNg, No MoRe pAin...”

While shouting, “DIE, FUCKING OTHER!” my evil double wants to pounce on me to stab me, but Heather takes control of my body and forces me to avoid her.

“You left me no other choice!” she says with my voice. “I’m not going to stand by doing nothing and condemn us to certain death!”

“DIE, HOLY FUCKING SHITTY OTHER!!!” screams my demonic double.

“Oh no, you die!” says Heather. “ÉTREINTE NOIRE!!!” [\[26\]](#)

A cloud of darkness surrounds and slowly suffocates the other Alice Lorange. I watch, helpless, while my double dies slowly. Then the meadow disappears, and we are back at the store.

The Trace gives me back control over me. I am angry at her, but at the same time, Heather saved my life. *She had no right to do that!* I exclaimed. *Controlling me... killing the other Alice...*

< *Uh, I can hear you, you know?* >

But otherwise we would have died, so... so... AHHHHHHHHHHHHH! I screamed, confused. *I DON’T KNOW HOW I SHOULD FEEL!!!*

< Alice. Concentrate. > Heather tells me. < There are other crystals to destroy. >

< I know! > I replied. < I just hope I won't see "guardians" again, others me in evil versions. >

< I don't think so, no. >

I go in search of other crystals and I destroy several of them. In the end, Heather was wrong. I had to face other "guardians," and some were very violent with their attacks, but what does Alice D do in the meantime?



I am Alice Demidova. D for short and simple. I found a magic crystal in an apartment. Rosa mentally told me to destroy it without further delay.

< Can't we wait a little? > I ask. < I don't want to see a guardian again right away. >

< I know it's hard for you, > Rosa tells me. < but we have to hurry. >

< "Hard"... easy for you to say. You've never been defiled by a filthy guy at the age of 10! >

For me, to see myself again at this age, so vulnerable, and in an evil version that would want to kill me with a meat knife, it gives me the creeps. My partner Trace says that she senses that more Traces are coming soon.

< So what? > I replied. < I can defeat them, no worries! >

Rosa calls me by my first name and I sigh.

"Fine, fine, here I go! острый водяной меч! [27]"

A crystallized water sword appears in my hand. I cut the crystal into pieces with my magic blade and I find myself on a snowy alley. *Here we go again*, I said to myself. I haven't dematerialized my sword yet, because I know exactly what to do with it.

As soon as the guardian arrives, a 10-year-old Alice D with bruises on her face and blood running down her legs, I cut off her head. This time, my double wore cat ears and had a tail. A nod to Alice in Wonderland?

“That’s it, and leave me alone!”

I find myself in the apartment again and I make my crystallized water sword disappear. Then I ask Rosa if she is happy now.

< Yes. Let’s find another crystal. >

At the same time, other Traces arrive. *As expected...* I use one of my defensive attacks, *водный туман* [28], to slow them down, before going on the offensive with frozen water arrows. What does Brown do while I fight them?



My name is Alice Brown. Right now I am in a room and I am standing in front of another guardian. An evil version of myself, disguised as the white rabbit from Alice in Wonderland. This other Brown tells me that she is sad because everyone at school makes fun of her. *Like me.* The other Brown also tells me that she has great difficulty reading. Another source of mockery. *Not like me,* I thought. Then the guardian tries to kill me with a gun, but I am faster.

“*O Earth Walls, Protect Me!* [29]”

Solid rock walls come out of the floor and take all the bullets that the evil Alice shoots at me. I then push one of these walls over the guardian, crushing her into the room’s wall, turning her into a pulp of flesh and blood.

Then I find myself in an abandoned house. My Trace, Elise, mentally tells me that everything is fine, that it’s over.

< I know. > I tell her. *< How many more crystals must I destroy? >*

< There are few left. > Elise reassures me. *< I know it’s not easy. >*

< Having to kill an evil version of yourself? You bet! That’s horrible. >

It seems so true, real. I feel like I’m committing bloody murders. Quite the opposite of a cute little magical girl having control of the earth element. I hope with all my heart that Kurosawa is doing well. What is the Japanese Alice doing during this time?



My name is Alice Kurosawa. I found a crystal in an old factory. My Trace, Aya, mentally whispers my name.

< I know what to expect. > I tell her.

Another guardian. More suffering. I create a magical fire bow and pierce the crystal with a flaming arrow.

I find myself in a throne room and I see the guardian. A Kurosawa dressed as a queen. An evil Kurosawa who tells me that she is the queen of Abnormaland. It reminds me of a dark version of Alice in Wonderland. The queen tells me that she is a disgrace to her family, that she breaks their reputation, that her female friends don't want her, that she will never be able to marry, that she is ugly, that she should commit suicide, that she...

“ENOUGH!” I scream to shut her up.

Still having my bow, I eliminate her with another red arrow, before ending up at the factory. The crystal no longer exists. Aya asks me if I am well. I tell her, “yes.” It was a lie.

< Let's go, Aya. There are other crystals to destroy. >

< Yes, let's get to work! >

I've always been a very good liar. Except with Lorange. With her, I must not lie. The Fourth Alice.



It's me, Alice Lorange. Some time later, we are gathered again in front of the last magic crystal. Heather mentally yells at me to destroy it quickly before Traces attack us by surprise.

< I want to, but what will happen? > I ask. < We will return to Earth, yes, but what will happen to the Traces? >

< They will return to their original dimension and so will we. > Heather answers me.

< WHAT! Why? > I asked, both angry and sad.

< A survival oath applies only “to survival”, thus helping you until your return to Earth. > explains my Trace with regret. < We cannot stay longer in your bodies. >

< But that's not fair! Can't we make another oath, which would allow you to stay? >

Heather tells me it would be possible, but they don't have time. Other Traces arrive at the same time. Brown and Kurosawa repel them with their magical powers.

< *Anyway, we can't... we don't want to stay.* >

Heather's words shut me up. I see that D is crying. Brown and Kurosawa have tears in their eyes. Their Traces must have told them the same thing as mine.

“Come on, Lorange,” said the Russian Alice. “Destroy this damned crystal...”

“LET'S GET IT OVER WITH!” concludes Brown, while continuing the fight against the evil Traces.

But I hesitate. What if we were to lose our magical girls' powers?

“We may lose them,” says Kurosawa. “But...”

“OUR LIVES ARE MORE IMPORTANT!” concludes D.

The blonde Alice will help the little girl and the Japanese woman to fight the Traces. For my part, I destroy the last crystal and everything becomes white.

I find myself on Earth, in my room, in my bed, as if everything that has just happened was just a dream. I'm back in a green long-sleeved sweater with jeans. I call my mother, Rayelle. She tells me that supper is ready. *What?* I asked myself, surprised. *Had I only been “gone” to Adelan Alarie’s house for an hour or two?* I feel that Heather is no longer in me. The conscious Trace left to join the other Traces in their evil dimension. Having no way to find the other Alice, unless they are on social networks, I hope they are well and that, like me, are back home.

Before going to supper, there is one last thing I need to verify. If I still have my magical girl powers over the wind. Without Heather, no dark type attack is possible, because it's her power, not mine. So, I try to transform by saying the first thing that comes to my mind.

“Par ma volonté, MÉTAMORPHOSE!” [30]

My body is surrounded by light. The light explodes and my clothes are gone. All I have left is my bra, my panties and my stockings. Suddenly, a tight white and dark green sleeveless top appears, hiding

my bra. Then, a light green mini skirt materializes, with dark shorts underneath, hiding my panties. Afterwards, short white gloves appeared, hiding my hands, followed by small green boots, covering my stockings. Finally, a big pale green ribbon emerged on my chest, as well as long thin ribbons on the back of my magical girl outfit. *Oh wow! In spite of my magic words' "corny" choice, I still have the power to transform...* Then I started laughing, but almost insanely, because I imagined all the twisted things I could do to Melane. Without killing her, of course. When Shawn, my dad, asks me if everything is okay, I quickly detransform. My magical girl outfit is replaced by my long-sleeved shirt and jeans. Then I'm going to supper. I pout when I see my plate because the sauce from the steak touches my vegetables and rice. Yet, Rayelle knows very well that I hate when the sauce touches something other than my meat. I still eat, but my brain feels downhearted.

The next day, I stand in one of my secondary school hallways. I wait for the start of my next class while looking at my watch. As usual. There are still noises, sounds, students talking to each other, students passing near me, but I ignore them. My brain still screams "danger" and I sigh. I couldn't find the three Alice on social networks. *But I'm sure they're fine. This is not the time to panic!* Suddenly I see her. Melane, in the flesh. She is chatting with another teenage girl. I'm sure Melane is laughing at me. *I would love to transform and give her a good thrash...!* Suddenly, a strange light rift appeared, interrupting my thoughts. *What is t...?* Out of this rift comes a monster, a big hornet with bright green eyes. The teenager who is with Melane utters a cry. Melane escape and the other students start running all over the place. There's panic.

The hornet, for the moment, is not attacking anyone, but I feel that it is not going to last. *I have to transform, but, Magical Girls Rule 101, don't do it in public.* I'm going to hide in my own locker, what a tight squeeze!, and I transform. As soon as I get out of there, I see the hornet chasing Melane. The fool hadn't fled very far. I sigh in frustration.

"YOU!!!" I cry out to the creature, as my wind magic is focused in my hands.

The hornet completely ignores me. It makes me very angry.

"GET READY, YOU FILTHY HORNET! AHHHHHHHHHHH,
EXPLOSION D'AIR!!!" [31]

[25] “AERIAL SAW!”

[26] “DARK EMBRACE!!!”

[27] “Water Sword Edge!”

[28] “Water fog.”

[29] Text in English in the original French version.

[30] “By my will, METAMORPHOSIS!”

[31] “AIR EXPLOSION”, could also be translated as the cooler “AIR BLAST” or even “AIR BLASTER”.

INTERLUDE 1: The Conscious Trace ~ Choice

My name, given by Lorange, is Heather. In the dark dimension where the Traces live with other creatures of evil, I am in deep thought. Since my encounter with the redhead Alice, I haven't wanted to devour human souls. Yet, as Rosa, Elise and Aya have told me, I have no choice otherwise I will starve to death.

The dimension where I live has a purple sky, forests of dead trees, caves with colored crystals, soil that is constantly red, a volcano that could erupt at any moment, villages and towns in ruins.

I slowly head towards a cave. I'm getting hungry. Suddenly, I hear a man screaming. *Another victim summoned to have his soul devoured*, I sadly thought to myself. I could try to save him, but I know it's a waste of time. Even if I could share his body with him, via a magical oath, there is no way to leave this dimension unless summoned by an outside source. I ignore the man's cries of distress and then silence reigns.

I continue on my way and enter the cave. I move among the crystals and then I come across a group of unconscious Traces. The Traces make an invocation and two humans appear. A young woman with brown skin and green eyes with a little boy with rosy skin and brown eyes. They scream when they see the ghostly creatures. The Traces, for their part, waste no time in devouring their souls. I am merely watching as the two bodies decompose in an accelerated manner. All that remains of the woman and the child is dust. Ashes.

My hunger is getting stronger and stronger. *I don't have a choice, do I?* I admit despite myself. I move away from the other Traces and I summon a human being. Having no control over who will appear, I hope it won't be Lorange. Fortunately, it is an old woman with mixed skin. I want to apologize to her before taking her life but all the poor lady can hear is a strange mixture of moans, guttural sounds and "ah, ah." Not being able to say anything more, and being very hungry, I devour the old woman's soul and my hunger is satisfied. For the time being.

Then I go in search of Rosa, Elise and Aya to discuss anything and everything. *Time seems to stand still in this place, but it is long for me... and for them as well.*

CHAPTER 8: Hornet ~ The Strange Rift

"GET READY, YOU FILTHY HORNET! AHHHHHHHHHHH,
EXPLOSION D'AIR!!!" [32]

A jet of compressed and magical air spurts out of my hands. The big hornet dodges it and the wind attack goes on a locker, making it explode, without damaging the surrounding lockers. *Uh-oh!* I said to myself, alarmed. The monster is no longer interested in Melane and it tries to attack me by stinging me with its stinger. I barely avoid it.

"Vent violent, [33] PUSH IT BACK!"

A strong wind pushes the hornet away from me.

"Come on, let's end this! SCIE AÉRIENNE!" [34]

A round saw blade, made of cutting wind, is formed and it rushes over the flying creature. The hornet cannot avoid it and is cut in half. Its corpse vanishes before reaching the floor.

The strange light rift is still there. I try to destroy it with a wind attack and the rift is getting bigger. *What is t...?* The rift then creates a strong draft, trying to get me inside it. I cling to an open locker, so I don't fly straight in. Against all odds, the teenager who was with Melane comes back and tries to help me.

"Take my hand!" she says strongly.

The unknown teenage girl is standing on another locker door because she, too, could be sucked through the rift.

"I can't," I told her, "I might let go!"

"Yes, you can, come on!"

I try to reach out to her, but the draft is too strong.

"No, leave!" I exclaimed. "You might get sucked in too!"

"No, I'm not going to abandon you," the student replied. "Even if I don't know you!"

The stranger says she doesn't know me. However, I have seen her many times in the previous days. I even think that we are in common

classes. *How is this possible? Is it due to my transformation into a magical girl?*

“But...!” I said, not understanding why this girl wants to help me so much. “You are an Other and I don’t even know your name!”

The draft becomes stronger and stronger. I’m going to let go any second. The stranger presents herself. Her name is Ethel. Ethel Elton. The name sounds familiar. *Isn’t she a childhood friend of Melane?* Ethel was about to say something else when I let go. I am sucked into the rift and Ethel, now alone, cries out in terror.

I am thrown on grass. I get up and look around. The light rift has disappeared and I am in a futuristic park. The swings, slides, climbing games and picnic tables all have fluorescent lights. Although it is daylight, they are lit. Being still transformed, I wonder if I shouldn’t hide to detransform when I notice a child looking at me. A blond boy with green eyes, at least 8 years old. He is wearing a vest and shorts with blue fluorescent light strips. In fact, all the people I see at the park all have clothes with stripes of different colors and thicknesses. *I must look weird*, I said to myself sadly. I go to say hello to the blond child, and he asks me a very odd question.

“How did you get out of the Rift?”

“Uh... well...,” I began to say before being interrupted.

“Only monsters come out of the Rifts. I didn’t expect to have to face an Ionasian creature.”

Sensing danger, I ask him to wait and explain the meaning of his words, but the child does not listen to me.

“Get ready, DIMENSION SHIFT!”

Suddenly, the sky changed color from blue to green and the park users disappear.

“But what’s going on?” I asked, not reassured at all.

“MATERIALIZATION!” simply yells the blond boy.

A knife, which appears to be made of solidified white light, appears in the kid’s hand.

“I’m Alex, A.L.A.N.’s leader, Rift Breakers!” he says, in an aggressive

but determined tone. “Creature from the abyss, I...”

“I AM NOT A MONSTER,” I shouted, interrupting him, wanting to defend myself.

“SILENCE!” screams Alex, enraged.

Alex, without saying anything more, rushes towards me, determined to kill me with his magic knife. *I have no choice. I have to defend myself!* Despite the dangerous situation I find myself in, I still have time to mentally wonder how the other three Alice are doing. Alice D, Alice Brown and Alice Kurosawa.

[32] “AIR EXPLOSION”, could also be translated as the cooler “AIR BLAST” or even “AIR BLASTER”.

[33] “Violent wind”, could also mean “strong wind”, “fierce wind”.

[34] “AERIAL SAW!”

CHAPTER 9: Defensive ~ Alice Versus Alex

I don't waste time defending myself.

"Vent violent, [35] PUSH HIM BACK!"

A strong wind pushes Alex away, but he manages to advance against the wind. *He is determined... but I am not going to let him kill me!*

"Cordes d'émeraudes, [36] COME TO MY AID!"

Greenish ropes appear and they try to tie up the blond boy. Alex manages to cut several of them with his knife, but others tie his legs. The strong wind continues to blow, and his body is pushed backwards while dragging on the ground. In despite the wind power, I hear him say an insult.

"I beg you, stop!" I exclaimed. "I am not a monster, an enemy! I am coming..."

The boy, while shouting in anger, manages to cut the greenish ropes that bind his legs and he tries, once again, to advance against the wind to attack me.

"My planet is called Earth," I continued. "What's the name of yours?"

The wind is starting to lose power. This magical attack cannot last forever. Alex is getting closer and closer to his target. In despair, I yell at him to stop. The blond boy is now close enough to me to throw his weapon. The strong wind's magical attack ceases and it no longer windy. Alex is about to throw his knife. To avoid it, I drop to the ground. The weapon passes over me. I got up quickly and Alex was planning to attack me, after rematerializing his magic weapon in his hand, when we both hear a girl's voice. The voice shouts, "STOP!".

Alex turns in the direction of the voice and a little girl appears. She must be no more than 10 years old. The child has long brown hair, skin of the same color and hazelnut eyes. *This girl... she reminds me of Alice Brown.* The little girl is wearing an overall skirt and a shirt with yellow fluorescent stripes.

"Lily!" Alex said when he saw her.

"Stop the fight!" Lily orders him. "She's not a monster!"

“But she came out of a Rift...”

“Charlie did an analysis. This teenage girl is not a monster, she’s an alien!”

Alex is all surprised. Me too, although, since I am on another planet, that does indeed make me an alien. I say again that my planet is called Earth. The blond boy then thinks that my presence is the beginning of an alien invasion. I sigh in frustration.

“No, no, not at all!” I exclaimed. “A Rift - is that what you call them? - appeared at my school. It sucked me in and I ended up here.”

“Really?” asks Alex. “That’s weird.”

“Do you think it’s weird?” I asked. “Isn’t it weirder that I became a magical girl after being in a strange house?”

Lily asks me what “magical girl” means. Alex wants to know more about the “strange house”. I sigh again, then I tell them a big summary of the events that took place in Adelan Alarie’s house. When I’m done, I detransform. My magical girl outfit is replaced by my sweater and jeans. Alex, for his part, makes his knife with solidified white light disappear.

“It’s unbelievable...” says Lily. “Lorange, isn’t it?”

“Yes, Alice Lorange.”

Alex suddenly shouts, “ORIGIN’S DIMENSION RETURN!” The sky turns blue again and the park users reappear. I ask what exactly happened. Lily explains to me that she and Alex are always changing dimensions when they have to fight monsters. She also says her full name is Lily Ádanyi. [\[37\]](#)

“I am Alex Barrier.” continued Alex, who also wanted to introduce himself. “Lily and I have our own group of Rift Breakers, called A.L.A.N. I’m the leader.”

“Yes, with Aimé Damour [\[38\]](#) and Nana Raimei [\[39\]](#).” continues explaining Lily. “Our duty is to protect our city by fighting the monsters coming out of the Rifts.”

I answered with a simple “okay.” I don’t understand everything, but I need to know where I am. I ask Alex. The blond boy tells me that I am in Xodias city, on the planet Ionas, in the Tellerise planetary system

and in the Udei galaxy. *Xodias, Ionas, Tellerise, Udei...* What strange names. Although Adelan Alarie is not a common name either.

“But you may attract attention with clothes without fluorescent stripes.” says Lily. “Let’s go buy you some new clothes.”

“Yes,” says Alex, “then we can go to the factory.”

I ask him which factory he is talking about. Lily just tells me to follow them. The two children started running towards the exit of the park. Even though I’m in the heart of the Unknown - on another planet! - and I still have unanswered questions, I catch up with them and follow them. After all, they may be Others, but they are my only guides in this other world.

[35] “Violent wind”, could also mean “strong wind”, “fierce wind”.

[36] “Emerald ropes”.

[37] Amharic word meaning “hunter”.

[38] His name is a French pun about love.

[39] Japanese word meaning “thunder”.

CHAPTER 10: Chik'Shion ~ UMD = Danger?

Alex and Lily take me in front of a clothing store called Chik'Shion. The two children and I enter the store and a pretty blonde woman welcomes us at the entrance.

“Welcome to Chik'Shion!” she says in a cheerful tone.

The woman's voice sounds a little robotic, in my opinion. Then the lady looks at me in a strange way. I feel like her green eyes light up in a strange color. A mixture of orange and purple. Lily addresses the woman, saying that I am a tourist from Nalpha city, which is not true. The blonde lady keeps looking at me. The little girl seems nervous all of a sudden. Alex comes to her rescue by insisting that I am “just a simple tourist who needs clothes”. Yet he, too, seems quite nervous. *So what's going on?* I ponder, worried.

Suddenly, the woman starts talking.

“UMD detected.”

Her voice is no longer human. I feel like I'm hearing a message pre-recorded by a machine. *This woman... is she a robot? How is this possible? She looks so much like a human... Ionasian being.* The robot woman continues to talk. She says that the authorities - the police? - will be alerted. Alex shouts an angry, “NO.” Not understanding the situation, I just say, “why?”. As for Lily, she tells the android that she is mistaken.

“This woman is not UMD, she's a tourist!” insists the little girl.

The automaton doesn't want to listen.

“Please stay until the arrival of the...”

Then the android's eyes no longer light up. They go from green to purple.

“Welcome to Chik'Shion!” she says in a cheerful tone. “How can I help you today?”

Despite this turnaround, Alex and Lily are still nervous. Lily whispers to me that the robot lady has been hacked, but she doesn't know by whom.

Hesitating a bit, I say I need cotton clothes.

“All our clothes are in raytanester.”

“In what?” I asked the automaton.

“In raytanester. It has been used on all clothing for centuries.”

It must be a fusion between rayon, elastane and polyester. All fibers I can’t wear, with my sensitive skin “burning.” Okay, I can put up with jeans that have cotton and polyester, but that’s an exception, like nylon bras. The rest of the time, it’s 100% cotton.

“Don’t you really have anything made of cotton?” I asked.

“Cotton hasn’t been used in clothing manufacturing since...”

I sigh. *How frustrating!* Alex asks me what’s wrong. He doesn’t understand why I insist so much on cotton.

“Perhaps she has an allergy to raytanester?” asks Lily aloud.

Then she whispers to Alex “don’t forget she’s an alien!”. I sigh again, before asking if it is possible to add fluorescent light strips on what I am wearing. *This would solve the problem!* The robot woman tells me that yes, but then I would have to place an order for “custom-made”. Only wealthy people and celebrities are eligible. Then Lily smiles. She takes a gold card out of a pocket of her overall skirt.

“Is that enough?” she asks the android.

“Of course it is.”

The machine with an Ionasian appearance then lists all types of light strips available on the market. All colors and thicknesses. I don’t know what to choose. There are so many colors. Alex suggests green.

“I would like to, but which green? Almond green, wormwood green, aniseed green, lemon green, khaki green, meadow green, fir green...?”

Alex answers me with emerald green and I accept this color. Lily then places the order with payment on home delivery. She gives her address to the robot woman.

“Good. Order placed.” said the android. “Thank you for doing business with Chik’Shion! Looking forward to seeing you again!”

Alex, Lily and I leave the store and walk through empty streets to avoid people strolling by. The boy with blond hair says that we had a narrow escape. He also tells Lily that it was a good idea to pay on delivery.

“I wasn’t going to give my card to a robot hacker!” exclaimed the little girl.

“Yes,” I said, “but now he or she has your address.”

“That’s okay. My family is publicly known.”

“Still...” think Alex. “Why did she detect you as UMD?”

I tell him I don’t even know what that means. Lily explains to me that it means “Undefined Mental Disorder” and that’s not a good sign. I ask why.

“Our city... no, our world... is crazy.”

Lily also explains to me that, on the planet Ionas, a person can be gay, lesbian or pansexual. No one is going to get them in trouble. However, if that person is transgender, he or she does not have the right to change sex through surgery. Those who do so illegally risk life imprisonment.

If a person has a mental disorder, diagnosed at birth, he or she must spend his or her entire life on medication and meeting with an AI psychologist. They are also always monitored. If this person is considered a “threat,” he or she is either automatically put to death or interned in a prison with other mentally ill people.

“UMD are people that the system can’t diagnose or who have fallen ‘through the cracks,’” says Alex. “You’re going to have to stay hidden, Alice.”

I find this unfair.

“How will I be able to return to Earth if I remain hidden?” I asked the boy.

Alex says he doesn’t know, but that Charlie will be able to help us. To do that, we have to go to the factory. Without saying anything more, the two children take me to the factory in question. It is old and abandoned for a long time.

CHAPTER 11: Factory ~ Charlie, Nana And Aimé

We enter the factory. I don't see anything out of the ordinary. Screens off, an assembly line stopped, a lot of dust, boxes everywhere. My brain wants to cry out, "danger, danger, danger!". *Come on, Alice, don't panic!* I hate - not to say "can't endure" - dust and mess.

Alex and Lily are heading towards a futuristic black elevator. I follow them. The elevator seems out of order, but Lily puts her finger on a small gray square and a digital image is projected. On the image, there is a numeric keypad. The little girl enters a code, the elevator door opens and the digital image disappears. Both children go into the elevator. As for me, I'm staying put. Alex asks me what's wrong and I remain silent. Lily then asks me if I am afraid of elevators.

"No, not at all!" I replied, a little offended. "It's just that..."

I don't know how to explain to them that at the moment I'm a little nervous, that I'm "afraid" of the Unknown, and that this futuristic elevator makes me uncomfortable. Instead of finding the words to explain my "mental state" to them, I ask the two children where they are going to go with this elevator.

"In the basement." replied Lily. "Where Charlie is, and maybe Nana and Aimé."

Her answer does not reassure me, but I join them anyway. The elevator doors close and we go down to the basement.

There, I leave the elevator. I follow Alex and Lily in a small corridor, and we arrive in a huge room. In a corner there are cots. In another corner, a small improvised canteen. A space with blue gym mats and another space filled with lit computer screens. Near the screens is a redhead man in his thirties dressed in black. He has a strange visor over his blue-green eyes, and he seems to be looking at the ceiling.

Alex and Lily are going to see him. I still follow them and suddenly I feel less nervous.

"Charlie?" asks Alex.

"He's in virtual reality." says Lily. "There's no way he can hear you."

“You were saying?”

The man, Charlie, spoke. Alex tells him that he has someone to introduce him. Charlie takes off his visor, blinks, and turns to the blond boy.

“The alien? I know.” he says, in a serious tone. “I knew you would come. It was the logical thing to do, after all.”

I want to talk to him, but all I can say is a “uh”.

“It’s embarrassing... I’m Charlie Always. Nice to meet you.”

When I hear it, I hold myself back from laughing out loud. “Always”. What a funny last name. It reminds me of sanitary pads.

“Hello. My name is Alice. Alice Lorange. Uh, ‘embarrassing’?”

“Yes, I mean... there’s a girl from another planet in front of me! How am I supposed to behave?”

I don’t know what to answer him. Charlie asks me if Alex and Lily have talked to me about what they do. Alex says they haven’t told me much.

“By the way, was it you who hacked the robot woman at Chik’Shion?” asks Lily to Charlie.

The man said “no” to her. He asks the little girl what happened. Lily summarizes the events to him.

“I see. Don’t worry.” says Charlie. “Maybe it’s a trick from one of my hacker buddies. I’ll make sure your order gets to you.”

Lily thanks him. After all, I really need the light strips. Despite everything, I ask if it is still necessary, if I should stay hidden.

“You are in a special situation. Not only are you from another world, but you are considered UMD.” explains Charlie. “For your survival, you have to keep a low profile. At the same time, you can’t stay locked up forever.”

Alex is pensive and then he has an idea.

“What if she stays in your apartment? Your neighbors have always been discreet.”

“That’s because we’re all outlaws.”

Hearing Charlie, and the idea that the redhead man disregards the laws, anger rises in me, but I must stay calm. Just because my autistic thinking prevents me from breaking the rules doesn’t mean that others aren’t allowed to. Anyway, Charlie is an Other. For them, it’s easy not to worry about rules and laws. Charlie then says I can stay at his place. When the light strips arrive, I could then go out, but discreetly.

“Alex or Lily can get you there,” he concludes.

I nod without saying anything, then we hear a girl’s voice calling Lily.

“Hi Nana!” said the little girl to the other kid.

A little girl, the same age as Lily, about ten years old, joins us. Nana has long black hair, small eyes of the same color, and a coppery skin with a slight tint of yellow. In my opinion, she looks a bit like Alice Kurosawa. She wears a vest and pants with red fluorescent light strips.

Nana is accompanied by a boy with red hair and blue eyes. He must be 12 years old. He, too, is wearing a vest and pants, but his fluorescent light strips are black, which makes me feel as if they are off. His hair is tied up in a ponytail. He wears large headphones with LED lights, which make me think of protective shells. Alex calls the boy Aimé.

“Hi everyone,” says Aimé.

“Alex, Lily, Charlie... and who’s that redhead?” asks Nana.

“This is Alice Lorange.” says Charlie. “She’s from another planet.”

“Yeah. A Rift brought her here,” Alex explains.

“Huh? It’s a joke, right?” said Nana, surprised.

“No.” Lily explains. “She’s going to have to stay in hiding at Charlie’s place, because she’s considered UMD.”

Aimé then says it’s bad luck. He introduces himself. Aimé Damour, a member of A.L.A.N. Nana introduces herself. Full name Nana Raimei. Also with A.L.A.N. Nana thinks it’s “too cool” to talk to an alien and I can’t help but sigh. Alex, Lily, Aimé, Nana and Charlie don’t look like aliens to me.

“It’s true that I was thinking of something more... ‘special’ as an

alien.” says Aimé. “Anyway, do you know everything about us?”

“No.” I said sadly. “There are so many things I don’t understand... and I want to go home.”

“I will look for a solution.” adds Charlie. “Rifts must be the key. In the meantime...”

“I know.” I said. “I have to stay hidden.”

“But I’m sure that with her powers she could help us fight monsters!” exclaims Alex.

Nana asks him what he means by that. The blond boy tells her about his battle with me and I take the opportunity to ask questions. I learn then that Xodias city is victim of the paranormal since “Alan’s incident”.

500 years ago, a certain Alan had opened up access to other dimensions, creating the “Rifts”, light cracks. Out of these Rifts come monsters and they attack everything that moves. Only the Rift Breakers - RB for short -, children chosen in each generation, can see them, fight them and destroy the Rifts. They also have supernatural powers.

As the RBs grow older, they lose their powers. Alan is the exception to this rule. He was the very first Rift Breaker and he was an adult. Alex’s group is called “A.L.A.N.” in his honor.

“Even though he’s the one responsible for all this shit.”

“Aimé!” exclaims Lily, angry at his foul language.

“But it’s true! How many other RBs have fallen in combat?”

“Way too much.” said Charlie.

There is a long silence and I’m very hesitant to break it. Despite everything, I go for it.

“Uh... does... your government... or people in power know about RBs?”

“No, and it’s better that way.” explains Charlie. “There’s been enough crime everywhere for years. If, on top of that, law enforcement tried to control the Rift Breakers, it would be a disaster. Just look at the UMD’s fate.”

Alex and his friends remain silent. I deduce that Charlie had been an RB in his youth and that he must have seen friends die in his fights against monsters.

“But let’s move on to something more joyful.” said the red-haired man. “I have access to your school notes!”

Alex and Aimé think it’s cool. Nana asks if she can see hers.

“No, that’s cheating!” Lily said angrily.

“I’m not going to change them!” Charlie replied. “Who do you think I am?”

“A hacker, a former Rift Breakers and our mentor.”

Lily’s words make Charlie laugh.

“It’s true. James always told me that I would be a good mentor.”

I learned from Alex that James is his older brother. Of Charlie’s generation, only him and the hacker survived. Alex, Lily, Aimé and Nana are the only latest generation RBs.

“Yes, there were seven of us...” said Charlie sadly. “But that’s all in the past. Let’s take a look at these notes!”

While he displays the notes on a holographic computer screen, I go to see the improvised canteen. It has dishes to reheat and canned food. Nothing much different than on Earth.

When I come back to the group, Lily and Aimé are very happy. Their school grades are excellent. Alex and Nana, on the other hand, are sulky. Their grades are pathetic. Nana says it’s not fair. Lily insists that she doesn’t study enough.

“I’d rather face the monsters and protect my city than waste hours studying like you, Miss Know-It-All!” Nana tells Lily.

“YOU! YOU DUMB I...!”

“Let’s not argue!” says Alex. “It’s not worth it.”

“But you have to be on my side!” Nana says. “We spend all our free time fighting while they’re in HoloWorks and HoloStudies!”

I understand then that many of their technologies are based on

holograms, not to mention fluorescent lights and artificial intelligences.

“Don’t talk nonsense!” said Aimé, meddling in the argument. “I fight and destroy Rifts as much as you do!”

“Come on, enough bickering.” says Charlie to stop the squabbling.
“One of you must accompany Alice to my apartment.”

Alex said that he thought he or Lily should take care of it. Aimé proposes himself and I accept that he accompanies me to the apartment. I say goodbye to the rest of the group and Aimé quickly go to the elevator. I join him, we go back up to the ground floor and we leave the factory.

Aimé makes me take a lot of deserted alleys and detours to avoid being noticed, then we arrive in front of a apartment block in poor condition. I ask him if Charlie really lives here.

“Yes, it’s an old building, not very well maintained, but his apartment is nice. It’s 204. Come on.”

Aimé enters the apartment block and I follow him. We take the stairs, because the elevator is broken down, and we arrive in front of apartment 204. I ask the child how to get in because I don’t see a door handle. However, the door has a small white tile.

“It’s just plain silly. You only have to take... one second.”

Aimé slides his fingers on the left side of the door and a small hook comes out. I think it looks like a lock hook. The kid picks it up and passes it over the white tile. The tile becomes black and the door opens. I think it’s impressive.

“It’s old technology. Not very much used these days.”

Aimé enters the apartment and I join him. The door closes behind us. The tile, on our side, is white again. Aimé goes to enter the hook in the right side of the door and then he asks me if he has to show me around.

“No, I... I think I can manage.”

“Okay. If you ever need anything, ask Martia to contact Charlie.”

I didn’t have time to ask him who Martia is that the child hurriedly

left, leaving me alone in the apartment. I take a deep breath. *Come on, Alice, it's like Adelan Alarie's house. Explore all!*

CHAPTER 12: Voice Command ~ Alice And Martia

I explore Charlie's apartment. There is a small kitchen, a living room, a room full of computer screens, a bathroom and a bedroom. In the bedroom, I come across a robot woman. Unlike Chik'Shion's android, which I can easily confuse with an Ionasian, this female automaton reminds me of a plastic doll. The robot has unnatural red hair and her green eyes seem to be off. *Could it be this Martia that Aimé told me about? She must be unplugged.* I look everywhere, but I can't find any wires to plug her in. *Well, it's not too important. There's canned food if I'm hungry. Now, how do I pass the time?*

Cleaning up? No, everything is pretty clean.

Watch TV? There is one, but I don't know how to open it. There are no buttons or remote control.

Sleeping? *Why not? Between that and doing nothing.*

Not having pajamas, and not wanting to snoop around in Charlie's clothes, I resign myself to going to bed with my own clothes. I don't know what the bed sheets are made of, but my skin stings a bit. I sigh and try to sleep.

The next day, I am visited by Lily. The light strips have arrived. I think it's great, but how do I put them on my clothes?

“Normally they are sewn with a special process, but these can stick. At least, I think so.” says Lily. “The easiest way would be for you to undress.”

“Uh, okay, but...” I said. “I was wondering... how do we wash our clothes? I would like to wash them today. And also wash myself.”

“Didn't you see the clothes cleaning system? It's near the kitchen.”

I tell Lily that “no.” I did see a shower bath in the bathroom, but I couldn't use it. I tell the little girl that there are no taps. Lily doesn't know what I'm talking about, but she takes me to a piece of wall furniture, made up of shelves closed with a glass panel. The child explains to me that all I have to do is put my dirty clothes in there, activate the voice command and after ten minutes they are cleaned and dried.

“It’s the same thing with the shower.” explains Lily. “You ask for lukewarm water, a spray of soap for body or hair, for so many minutes in voice command, and you can wash yourself.”

I had never thought about using my voice to make things work in this apartment. I suppose that the television, probably holographic, also works the same way.

Then I ask the little girl if she can take care of my clothes while I go in the shower.

“Of course.”

While I’m washing - it feels weird to see the shower working through my voice - Lily uses the cleaning system to make my green long-sleeved shirt and jeans clean. Then she puts the emerald green fluorescent light strips on them. I plan to join her but I’m all wet. *I was able to find a towel, but how do I dry my hair?* I call Lily for help.

“Yes, Alice? Your clothes are ready.”

“That’s good, but I don’t know how to dry my hair.”

“Stay on the mat, near the bath, and say ‘dry.’”

“D...dry...? AHHHHHHHHH!”

A warm air current passed over me, my skin is “on fire” and I am dry all over. Lily asks me if everything is okay.

“Yes, no! Huh. Could I have my clothes?”

After I get them back, I quickly get dressed - to get rid of that “burning” feeling - and get out of the bathroom.

Lily then tells me that she has to leave now if she doesn’t want to miss too many classes at school. I thank her for her help and say goodbye. After the child leaves, I go to the kitchen for a snack and then I go back to the bedroom. The robot woman has not moved since yesterday. *If a voice command must be used...*

“Martia?”

Nothing happens.

“Activating Martia?”

Her green eyes light up.

“Martia version 3.02 awakening.”

The android moves her head gently, as if to focus on me.

“Hello Charlotte. The weather is nice today.”

Charlotte? Why does she call me Charlotte?

“Uh, hello?” I said with some hesitation.

“This is our 687th session of Wellness and Identity Restructuring.” says Martia. “So, do you want to tell me about your day?”

I ask her who Charlotte is. Martia says it’s a good joke and that Charlotte is me. I want to reply, but Martia quickly silences me.

“If you continue with this nonsense, I’m going to have to add ‘split personality’ to your file. Now, tell me about your day.”

I sigh. *She must have a bug or maybe she was modified illegally. I’m still going to talk to her.*

“Of course. Lily came to visit me.”

“Ah yes, your friend. Did you discuss interesting things?”

“Uh... yes?”

“You don’t seem very outspoken today, Charlotte. I’m here to help you.”

“But help me with what? What is the... my problem?”

“You know that very well. You’re a girl, Charlotte. A girl, not a boy.”

I can’t believe it. Martia keeps talking.

“Do you remember the first time we met? You told me that the world was crazy, that you wanted to be a boy and that you hated your name. You’ve come a long way since then, but we still have a lot of work to do.”

This Charlotte... could it be...?

“Charlie?” I asked the robot.

“Do you want me to communicate with him?”

“No. I want to know if Charlie was Charlotte.”

“I’m sorry. I don’t understand your request.”

Then Martia continues to talk to me about the encounters between her and “me” (rather Charlotte) to “reconstruct” her identity. According to her, Charlotte has a serious problem and needs to be treated quickly. It makes me angry. My brain is steaming with anger.

“You are worse than all the Others united! I HATE you!!!”

“Charlotte. This is not a good attitude to have. I want to help y...”

“ENOUGH! Deactivate Martia!”

Martia’s green eyes go out and her head leans forward. I scream in rage and, wanting to get some fresh air, I leave the apartment for a walk in the city. After all, all I must do is be discreet.

CHAPTER 13: Police ~ Rift and Battle

I walk in several small streets, while avoiding the big crowds. *Ah, that makes me feel good!* I exclaimed. *But...* My head is starting to get heavy. *How will I get back to the apartment?* I look around me and I recognize nothing. *No, no, no!* A pain wants to settle in my head. *Don't panic, Alice! Just turn around!* So, I'm walking in the opposite direction, but I still don't know where to go. As my head wants to explode with pain, and I want to scream in distress, I hear a woman calling for help.

I have to help her. After all, I am a magical girl now, and magical girls have to help people, help Others. Without thinking about the risks, I transform.

“HENSHIN, [40] YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

My body is surrounded by light. The light explodes and my clothes are gone. All I have left is my bra, my panties and my stockings.

Suddenly, a tight white and dark green sleeveless top appears, hiding my bra. Then, a light green mini skirt materializes, with dark shorts underneath, hiding my panties. Then, short white gloves appeared, hiding my hands, followed by small green boots, covering my stockings. Finally, a big pale green ribbon emerged on my chest, as well as long thin ribbons in the back of my magical girl outfit.

Afterwards, I'm going to find the woman. She is a brunette with eyes of the same color. A black-haired man, armed with a knife emitting a strange light, probably a thief, a sexual aggressor, or worse, both, is about to attack her.

“NOOOOOOOOOOO!” I cried.

My hands focus with my wind magic.

“Cordes d'émeraudes, [41] COME TO MY AID!”

Greenish ropes appear and they tie the man. He curses and tries to free himself, in vain. I ask the woman if she is all right.

“Yes, but how did you do that? It looks like magic.”

“Uh, well...”

“It doesn't matter. The police will soon arrive to take care of him.”

Hearing the word “police”, I am startled. *If I get arrested, it's going to be*

a disaster! I don't want to be interned or, worse, killed! The brunette lady asks me if I'm okay. I ignore her, I start running as far as I can, then I detransform. My magical girl outfit is replaced by my long-sleeved shirt and jeans.

I thought I was out of danger when I saw a black-haired policewoman in the distance. The policewoman calls out to me. *I'd better go see her. If I stay calm and don't get noticed, nothing will happen to me!* While taking a relaxed air, I join her and I say hello.

“Greetings, citizen. It's a beautiful day, don't you think?”

“Yes.”

Her voice is cold and distant. Almost like a robot, whereas she is indeed human or rather an Ionasian. It freaks me out.

“Maintaining order is important for our city to prosper. It's too bad all these Abnormals ruin everything.”

“You're talking about criminals...”

“Yes, and all these UMD. You cannot know how many have been interned and eliminated this year.”

I remain silent. *I must not attract attention!*

“It's a real outbreak! There are more and more of them. I think the government is going to revise its laws and its health care system for mental disorders.”

I still remain silent. *Don't say a word. Let her speak.*

“I've even heard of a bonus for police officers who arrest large numbers of UMD.”

I refrain from screaming in anger.

“But I must be boring you with all this.”

“No, no! This is... fascinating... but I have to go. I, uh, have an important appointment and I don't want to be late.”

I lied. Me, who hates lies. Who has difficulty lying. For my survival, I did it. I lied to the policewoman.

“Of course. Good day, citizen.”

“Good day!”

The policewoman walks away from me and I sigh with relief. I can now go back to looking for Charlie’s apartment.

I continue walking and take a break by sitting on a lighted bench. Suddenly, a Rift appears. I get up in one leap. A giant spider emerges from this Rift. *It’s as big as a lion! I have no choice. I must face it before it kills someone!*

“Par ma volonté, TRANSFORMATION!” [42]

In a second, I am transformed and ready for battle. The spider looks at me and then tries to hurt me with its many legs. I barely dodge them.

“My turn! SCIE AÉRIENNE!!!” [43]

A round saw blade, made of cutting wind, is formed and it will cut a leg of the spider. At the same time, Lily arrives. She asks me if I’m okay.

“Yes! Do you want to give me a hand?”

“What a question! I’m a Rift Breakers, it’s my duty to fight!”

She screams “DIMENSION SHIFT!” and the sky changes color from blue to green. We are in another dimension with the monster.

“MATERIALIZATION!” yells Lily.

A magic bow, bronze in color, appears in her hands. Without wasting time, the little girl throws a silver arrow at the spider. The attack seems to slow down the monster, because the spider moves very slowly.

“Cool! EXPLOSION D’AIR!” [44]

A jet of compressed air spurts out of my hands and, when it touches the spider, explodes, causing it serious injuries. Suddenly, I see Nana appear, followed by Alex and Aimé.

“Well...” says Alex. “It looks like you guys are doing well together.”

“Yes. It’s great!” I answered.

“Hey!” Nana replied. “I want to fight, too.”

Nana materializes her weapon, a spear which seems to be made of a yellow crystal, and she attacks the spider with a x5 combo, while laughing. Alex sighs, and he makes his knife appear, which seems to be made of solidified white light. He throws his weapon right into the spider's eyes, blinding it.

“AH! Alex, you make this fight too easy!”

“Nana, this is serious! Don’t underestimate monsters.”

“But this spider is a weakling! Aimé doesn’t even have to use his Souls’ powers to help us.”

I ask her what she is talking about. Aimé explains to me that he is a particular Rift Breakers. A very rare one. He carries the souls of fallen RB and controls the elements associated with each Soul’s affinity. As Aimé has 6 Souls, all of different affinities and generations, he has access to all the elements. Their names are Rowan (fire), Nilam (water), Dewitt (light), Iola (darkness), Flavien (earth) and Midori (wind). Light and darkness are moral elements, while fire, water, earth and wind are vital elements. Aimé sometimes manages to communicate with his Souls, although their relationship is tense.

“The best thing is to show you.” says Aimé to me. “Nana, move away.”

“NO! I still want to attack the spider and I haven’t even electrified my spear yet!”

“As A.L.A.N.’s leader, I order you to move away!”

Nana shouts to Alex a word I don’t know, probably a swear word to the inhabitants of the planet Ionas, and she moves away from the monster.

Without saying any more, Aimé unleashes elemental attacks by calling his Souls. Each time, the LED lights in his headphones and the fluorescent light strips on his clothes change color to the color of the element he is using. Red for fire, blue for water, yellow for earth, green for wind, white for light, purple for darkness. When Aimé has finished, the spider is in deformed pieces. It’s dead. Nana, to express her rage, because she would have liked to attack the monster more, will destroy the Rift with her spear, then she screams “ORIGIN’S DIMENSION RETURN!”.

The sky turns blue again, the children make their weapons disappear, except for Aimé, and I detransform. My magical girl outfit is

immediately replaced by my clothes. I then tell Aimé that he is over-powerful.

“Yes, but it is a great responsibility to have such powers. Alex, like James before him, has protection and healing. Lily has her magic arrows. Nana has her electric spear.”

“I think it’s unfair.” says Nana. “I feel like I have the weakest power in the group.”

“You’re talking nonsense.” says Alex. “I have the weakest powers. They’re all defensive!”

“But they’re powerful.” said Nana. “You’re never in danger of dying from wounds!”

Alex remains silent. I feel like the group is tense. *Is it jealousy?* Then Lily asks me what I was doing there.

“I went out for a walk... and not to think about Martia anymore. I am lost.”

“Oh! We can walk you home no problem”, says Nana.

“Did you have any problems with Martia?” Alex asks. “I can talk about it with Charlie.”

“No... not really... it’s just... who’s Charlotte?”

“It’s best to talk about it discreetly on the way.” concludes Aimé.

As Alex and his friends walked me back to apartment 204, they explained to me that Charlotte was Charlie. I suspected as much. Martia was her AI psychologist.

Because Charlie has an innate hacking talent, as well as contacts in the criminal underworld, not only was he able to surgically change his sex at the age of 18, but he managed to kidnap and reprogram Martia so that she would not be a threat to his new identity. Now Martia continues her psychology sessions with him, as if he were still Charlie. She is frozen in time and is unable to conceive that Charlie and Charlotte are the same persons. Most of the time, Charlie leaves her deactivated, but sometimes he has fun conversing with her, while observing her codes and how her AI behaves.

“He believes that one day, artificial intelligence will have access to

emotions like the Ionasians and will want to claim their rights.” explains Alex. “According to him, no one is ready for that, and when that happens, the world will be at war. Ionasians versus machines.”

I remain silent. Intelligent machines, a war, the Rift Breakers, autistics like me... It makes me think a lot.

Arriving at apartment 204, I thank everyone and say goodbye. I go back to Charlie’s room and Martia is still disabled. I barely look at her and I go to rest on the bed. Something tells me that the next few days are going to be interesting.

A week goes by. I get more or less used to living in Xodias city, while avoiding the forces of law and order, and helping A.L.A.N.’s members with their struggles against the Rifts’ monsters. I learn from Charlie that it would be possible to travel from one world to another using the Rifts. At least, that’s the only explanation he could find for my arrival on the planet Ionas. However, he doesn’t know which Rift to take so that I can return to Earth.

It makes me a little sad, but, at the same time, between traveling between mysterious worlds and being at school with homework, I choose without hesitation to venture into this dear Unknown. I also learned that it was indeed one of Charlie’s hacker buddies who had hacked the Chik’Shion woman robot. Also, that Charlie’s weapon, when he was a Rift Breakers as Charlotte, was a magic camera. He took pictures to weaken and hurt monsters. His camera even worked on ghostly creatures. It makes me remember the conscious

Traces. *Heather... I hope you’re okay.*

Finally, on another day, while Alex and his friends are busy pushing back a group of monsters, mutant bats, I take the opportunity to take a Rift, after having said goodbye to them. I then find myself in a city that seems abandoned after a disaster. Cars parked everywhere, vandalism on buildings, broken windows, garbage on the sidewalks. While taking a deep breath, I start walking.

[40] Japanese word meaning “transformation”.

[41] “Emerald ropes”

[42] “By my will, TRANSFORMATION!”

[43] “AERIAL SAW!!!”

[44] “AIR EXPLOSION”, could also be translated as the cooler “AIR BLAST” or even “AIR BLASTER”.

INTERLUDE 2: Alice's Mother ~ Despair

My name is Rayelle Lorange. I'm in the living room of my house and I hold back from breaking into tears. My only daughter, Alice, has been missing for more than a good week. The last time she was seen was at school. I have notified the police, of course, and they are looking for her, but it is as if Alice has disappeared without a trace.

I questioned her schoolmates, who had already been questioned enough by the police, but no one could tell me anything. How is this possible? Yet there is this teenage girl. What was her name again? Ethel... Elton? Yes, Ethel. She told me a crazy story. Ethel told me that a magical girl fought a big hornet with bright green eyes. Then she was sucked into a strange light rift. The magical girl had red hair, like my daughter. Ethel also told me that no one remembers the magical girl or the flying monster except herself. This poor girl has a vivid imagination.

At least her friend Melane was more reasonable. She told me nice things about Alice. I don't understand why my daughter never told me about her. Alice always told me that she didn't have any friends at school.

In short, I wait every day for news from the police, but all I get is silence as an answer. My husband, Shawn, tries to reassure me, but he only makes me feel worse. I would pray for Alice's safe return, but I am not a religious person. I'm not going to change who I am, even in the midst of despair. Shawn is a Christian, but since we got married, I have never heard him pray at home.

Alice..., I thought, as if I wanted to send a mystical calling. If you can hear me. One way or another. I beg of you. Come back home.

CHAPTER 14: Natural ~ Cutting Breeze

In the city that seems to be abandoned, I keep walking. I notice that it is daylight, although the sun is on the decline. I am not transformed and my green fluorescent light strips are still on. I quickly discover that there is a big problem. Zombies. Everywhere. *An undead invasion. Are there any survivors?* Wanting to hide from a group of zombies who have seen me, I enter a small house.

In the kitchen, I come across an armed young man. His hair is brown, his eyes are green, his skin is rosy. He must be between 16 and 18 years old. He is wearing a simple sweater and very worn pants. In no time at all, he points his shotgun at me.

“Who are you and, more importantly, what do you want from me?” he asks me in a firm tone.

It happened so fast that I only showed him my hands, so he could see that I was unarmed. My brain didn’t remember what he said.

“Did you hear me?” he says to me, with impatience in his voice. “I said...”

“Yes, but I didn’t understand anything.”

The young man asks me again who I am. I tell him that my name is Alice Lorange and he quickly becomes angered.

“Alice... Lorange? What the heck is this bullshit? You’re a fucking Modified, is that it, huh?”

“A what?”

I don’t understand anything and the fact that he’s pointing his gun at me doesn’t help.

“Don’t mock me!” he exclaimed, “You have a Modified name!”

“I...”

“But your appearance is that of a Natural, just like me. No... Don’t tell me you’re... a Namoï?”

“A Namoï?”

“Damn, you know VERY WELL what I’m talking about!”

The tension and misunderstanding of my situation makes my head heavy. I feel that pain wants to come. *Does this Other want to make me suffer or what? I say to myself frustrated. Then why is he threatening me with his shotgun? I am not a zombie!*

“No, I don’t know anything!”

I started talking without meaning to.

“I don’t understand anything, and you don’t explain anything!”

I am angry. Very angry.

“Why is everything so complicated with Others? IT’S NOT FAIR!”

The young man with brown hair, not expecting this reaction from me, asks me if I am suffering from memory loss.

I plan to say a big “no” when I start thinking quickly. *If I tell him I’m from another world, he’ll think I’m crazy and he’ll probably shoot me. It’s better to be careful, even if it means lying.* I hate lies. I would never like to lie, but I have no choice.

“Y...Yes.” I said to him. “I remember my name, the zombies, and nothing else.”

He lowered his rifle.

“I’m sorry. Even if my hatred for those of your kind is not going to go away, it would be cowardly to shoot you.”

I say a simple thank you and he introduces himself.

“I am Codiriaz of Luxem.”

When I hear his zany name, I start laughing.

“So...Sorry...” I tried to say, between two laughs. “It’s... it’s just... funny...”

Codiriaz sighs.

“All Natural are like that. Only the Modified and the Namoï have sick names!”

While forcing myself to stop laughing, I ask Codiriaz what he means by “sick names”.

“Strange names, too simple, like yours.”

“I don’t understand. The Natural have complicated names, the Modified and the Namoi have simple names. Is that it?”

“That’s right,” Codiriaz tells me.

“But why?”

He tells me it has always been like that. Although he has noticed my green fluorescent light strips, always lit, he doesn’t ask questions about it.

Afterwards, Codiriaz explains to me, without realizing it, everything I need to know about this other planet. It is called Medocorilia, in honor of the Day god, Medo, and the Night goddess, Corilia. I am in Erisko city. This world has been struggling with a zombie apocalypse for the past three years. It also has a racial conflict that has existed since the dawn of time between the Natural, the Modified and the Namoi.

The Natural are naturalists and believers. They venerate Medo and Corilia. According to them, it is the love of the two deities that created life. They also have an enormous respect for nature and for the genes’ purity.

The Modified are their opposite. They are industrialists and researchers. According to them, Medo and Corilia are myths, a religion invented from scratch to control the people. What created life is the energy of Sera’s crystals. Sera, whose full name is Sera Esperance, is a researcher who discovered the unique properties of the crystals that will bear her name. Unlike the Natural, the Modified manipulated the genes in each generation to evolve, which is seen as the work of evil for the Natural.

The Namoi, as for them, are rare. They are bastards, children born of a Natural-Modified couple, and who must live with the constant hatred of both peoples. As I have a Modified’s name and a Natural’s appearance, Codiriaz took me for one of them.

“Have you understood everything?” asks Codiriaz.

“Yes, so... I am Alice, a Namoi.”

Another lie, but I have no choice. For survival.

“Nice to meet you.” He says to me, with a semblance of politeness.

“Are you going to be able to manage on your own?”

“Yes, I think so. What were you doing there?”

“I was looking for food. I need provisions if I want to stay alive until I get to the Shelter.”

“A ‘Shelter’?”

“Yes. I didn’t explain that to you. Since the arrival of the undead, some cities have been able to fortify themselves. They are safe places, where it is possible to live a semblance of normal life. The nearest Shelter is two weeks away.”

“I suppose there are Shelters for the Natural and Shelters for the Modified?”

“Yes, well, that’s what I heard from other survivors. Nobody seems to want Namoi.”

Angry, I yell that it’s not fair. Codiriaz replies that this is the way it is, that this is the way the world works, and that my parents should have thought twice before they gave birth to me.

The words of the Natural young man make me snap. *How dare he say that I should not exist? Stupid Other!* I don’t take the time to think. My rage is out of control. I transform in a second and, before Codiriaz can yell something at me, or shoot me, I attack him.

“BRISE COUPANTE!” [\[45\]](#)

The magical breeze gently begins to cut his flesh. On the stroke of surprise, Codiriaz drops his shotgun. *I have the right to live!* His clothes, already dirty, are stained with fresh blood. *But... am I killing him?* The young man with brown hair cries out when his hands receive deep cuts. The scream becomes a shriek as his right eye turns into a mush of red flesh. Shocked by this bloody scene, and the fact that I am solely responsible for it, I undo the magic attack while shouting my incomprehension.

“NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO! WHY, WHY, WHY?”

Then I run away from the house. No zombie on the horizon. I keep

running, while taking several small alleys, and the Natural young man didn't follow me. I don't think I'll ever see him again. I don't even know if he will survive because of the wounds my magical attack inflicted on him.

[45] “CUTTING BREEZE!!!”

CHAPTER 15: Modified ~ Cursed Name

Still transformed into a magical girl, I keep running. I stop in front of a convenience store with broken windows and go inside, thinking maybe I'll find something to drink. After all, it's exhausting running like that.

I don't consider myself to be a very physically fit teenager. I don't exercise much. Not for lack of effort, but because my skin wants to "shake" and "get sticky" when I sweat for a long time. A feeling that I hate and, as with the dear paper, I want to avoid it at all costs. At the same time, although I don't follow my weight, I don't want to gain too many pounds and become obese. I even think I have extra pounds, by the way. At the same time, I'm not tracking my weight, so how do I know if I've gained weight or not? *Well, Alice, don't bother with that!* I exclaimed mentally. *If you've ever gained weight, you'll lose it in no time with all your adventures between worlds! Ionas, Medocorilia... survival in the Unknown's infinity!*

In short, after reassuring myself about my body weight, I search through the clutter of the convenience store's remains. Normally, my body would have reacted to this mess because everything is upside down, but something must be on my mind because it is not shaking. My skin doesn't "burn" either. Finally, I can't find anything to drink. I plan to leave when I see a silhouette in the distance. *Someone is coming... A survivor?* It would be surprising to see a zombie alone, as they stand more often in a group. While remaining on my guard, I call him.

"HEY! HEY, YOU THERE!"

The shadow starts to run in the direction of the small abandoned store. I wonder if I should prepare a magical attack when a male voice answers me.

"DON'T SHOUT LIKE THAT! YOU MIGHT ATTRACT ZOMBIES."

"OKAY, BUT YOU'RE SCREAMING TOO!"

"I KNOW. WAIT!"

The Medocorilian being arrives at the convenience store. He enters to join me and I see that the silhouette belonged to a young man. Like Codiriaz of Luxem, he must be between 16 and 18 years old, although

he seems to be a little older. His hair is dark blue, almost black. His eyes are red. Ruby red, to be more precise. His skin is as white as chalk. He wears a cotton fleece, pants, and he has a backpack. Without thinking, I ask him if he is a vampire.

“No, of course not. I’m just a simple Modified with a cursed name.”

“With a cursed name? I don’t understand.”

He tells me his name is Jack Coronyson. I still don’t understand.

“How? You don’t know about the Corony?”

“No, I... I have amnesia.”

Here we go again with the lies. It has to be. For my survival.

“I just remember my name, Alice Lorange, the zombies, that I’m a Namoï, and that’s it.”

“Oh. I feel sorry for you. To have lost your memory in the middle of a zombie apocalypse sounds awful.”

Jack explains to me that his last name has “Corony” in it.

Corony was a brand of soft drink. Nothing alarming, but the word Corony is also associated with a deadly virus that caused a global pandemic a good ten years ago. Many people died from it, although a vaccine was quickly developed, and since then the word Corony has been associated with disease and death. Even the soft drink company had to change its name to make “Corony” disappear. Now its name is Ronya.

“Since the pandemic, our family has been associated with the virus, even though we were in no way responsible for the tragedy.” Jack continues to explain. “That’s why my name is cursed. In addition, the virus that caused the first zombies to appear, and thus the apocalypse of our world, is believed to be a mutant version of the Corony, which researchers call the Coro-Z.”

Coro-Z spread so rapidly that no preventive vaccine and cure for zombification has been found. All that the Medocorolian can do is survive. According to Jack, even in a Shelter, life is not easy.

“I had known Etienne, a Modified with aquamarine hair and golden eyes. He had left a Shelter because he felt locked up, as if he were a

prisoner. In addition, he had told me that there was not enough room to take in other survivors. I think he had also left to make room for someone else.”

I ask Jack what has become of Etienne. The red-eyed Modified remains silent. I deduce that the aquamarine-haired Modified did not survive the undead.

After several minutes of silence, Jack says he has to get back on the road. I asked him if he was going to go to the nearest Shelter and he said “no”. I also ask him if it is true that there are Shelters for the Natural and Shelters for the Modified.

“Yes, and in all honesty, it’s stupid! We should help each other, survive together, not be divided by hate! Besides, the Namoï are not entitled to them. If they get too close to a Shelter, they are automatically shot, just like zombies.”

I find this outrageous. Before leaving, Jack asks me if I want to follow him. He can ensure my protection for a while. Although it wouldn’t be unpleasant to have company, especially if a horde of zombies gets in my way, I tell the dark blue-haired Modified that I’ll be on my own. *After all, this is not my world. I’m just passing through. All I have to do is find a Rift to go back to another world.*

After Jack’s departure, I leave the convenience store and explore the Erisko city, avoiding zombies, and trying to find a Rift. As a precaution, I remain transformed into a magical girl.

The sun sets, the night begins, the zombies become more active and alert. No trace of a Rift. I’m getting tired. I’m hungry, thirsty, sweaty. My skin trembles and is “all sticky”. I sigh with discouragement. *It’s not fair..., I thought, before entering a house to find something to eat.*

CHAPTER 16: Couple ~ Entre-Deux

In the house, I can't find anything edible, except cat food. I'm not hungry enough to eat them. I take a good hour to rest, which "calms" my skin and restores it to its normal state, and then I continue exploring the city.

When I see a horde of zombies in the distance, I make several detours to go around it, and I find myself near a shopping mall. There are zombies there too, but in small numbers. *I could easily beat them all with my magic but I might make too much noise and attract the horde.* Suddenly I heard strange voices. They seemed to come from the department store. Thinking they are survivors in need of help and ignoring the fact that the noise will draw the horde towards me, I run towards the mall, killing all the undead as they pass by with my wind attacks. This makes a lot of noise and the horde, in the distance, slowly advances towards the supermarket parking lot.

At the mall, I come across an incredible scene. A couple of survivors are hiding in a small store, zombies are prowling around, and some are killing each other. I'm going to join the couple, defeating a few undead along the way.

The woman is a Natural blonde with blue eyes. Her skin is milky. She wears red clothes that are faded and torn in places. The man is a Modified with pink hair and unnatural blue eyes, namely teal blue. His skin, like Jack's, is as white as chalk. He is wearing jeans, a sweater and a coat. They have dirt, tears and dried blood.

"Are you all right?" I asked them.

"Yes," said the woman, "but what's going on here?"

"Zombies killing each other..." said the man. "I've never seen this before."

"Neither have I." I told them. "I am Alice Lorange, a Namoï, and you?"

The woman's name is Elrikari of Elsanim, the man's name is Collin Seewater. As they are an interracial couple, they cannot go to a Shelter unless they separate.

"I'd rather DIE than be separated forever from my husband!" exclaims

Elrikari.

“Come on, honey, you’re going to scare Alice!” Collin said to her.

“Then neither you nor I will die.”

The blonde woman was about to tell me something, probably asking me where I got my magical girl’s outfit, when she starts screaming. Three zombies entered the store. Collin plans to shoot them with a gun he kept in his coat pocket when I get in his sights.

“Damn it, Alice, what are you doing? Get out of the way!”

I tell Collin that I can take care of them.

“SCIE AÉRIENNE...” [\[46\]](#)

A round saw blade, made of air, is created.

“TRIPLE!”

It splits in three and the saws will attack the zombies. While two of them decapitate two undead and disappear, the last saw is dodged by the remaining zombie. The wind saw spins around him and tries to cut off his head, but the zombie still dodges it.

Collin can’t believe it.

“This zombie...” he says. “He has a Medocorilian behavior.”

“How is this possible?” asks Elrikari, surprised. “And, Alice, how can you have such powers?”

I remain silent. The undead continues to dodge my saw and, as the magical attack lasts only a limited time, it vanishes. The zombie moves one step towards us. Wanting to threaten him, I shout.

“DON’T COME ANY CLOSER OR I’LL...!”

Against all odds, the zombie interrupts me as he speaks.

“I don’t want to hurt you. I’m Miller, an Entre-Deux.” [\[47\]](#)

Collin, Elrikari and I remain mute. We are too shocked to say anything. A talking, intelligent zombie.

“We are a line of zombies that have preserved our Medocorilian soul, thanks to the Good Veralinux.”

I hold myself back from laughing. *Veralinux...*, I said to myself. *HA, a linux!* [48]

“Veralinux of Healenis, the first of us.” continues to explain the intelligent zombie. “We are few in number, but we survive. Some of us are refugees in the Community, an isolated village, others survive alone, and there are some who want to help the Medocorilian survivors. I belong to the last category, along with my buddies.”

Miller’s words bring many questions to my brain. He looks like a Modified because his hair is bright orange and his eyes are lemon yellow. I wanted to ask him about the Entre-Deux when a Rift appears nearby.

“What’s that?” Elrikari asks me.

I tell her it’s a Rift and I have to go. Before her husband can say something back to me, I run and enter the Rift. It disappears behind me, leaving the interracial couple and the intelligent zombie in a state of incomprehension.

[46] “AERIAL SAW...”

[47] Means “Between-Two”, as in “between two states”.

[48] The operating system for the computer with the same name.

INTERLUDE 3: The Japanese Woman ~ Idol And Goddess?

I am Alice Kurosawa. I had heard the rumors. About a serial killer who kidnaps young women, marries them, and then kills them. I had no idea that this killer actually exists. I never thought he would be interested in me. Yet, I was kidnapped by this man, but he is going to have the surprise of his life.

You see, I still have my transformation into a magical girl. I still have my power over fire. So as soon as he untied me, because you have to have your hands free to dress in a wedding dress, I transformed. My body found itself surrounded by a soft light. The light exploded and my clothes disappeared. All I have left is my underwear. Suddenly, a tight white and dark red sleeveless top materialized. Then, a pale red mini skirt appeared, with dark shorts underneath. Afterwards, short white gloves arrived, followed by small red boots. Finally, a big pale red ribbon appeared on my chest, as well as long thin ribbons on the back of the magical girl's outfit.

My kidnapper's eyes wandered away in awe when he saw me transformed and then asked me if I was an idol [49] and a goddess. I started to laugh. I thought it was too funny. Me, an idol? I'm far too old. I'm 20 years old. Although my magical girl's outfit, with the mini skirt, can very well make think of a stage costume for idols. A goddess? Do I really look like a divinity? I throw a simple "no" to him, before carbonizing him with my powers. Then I ran away and went back home.

The next day I wondered if I could do more as a magical girl. The city where I live, Ikamori, has a lot of crime these days. At the same time, I don't want to attract attention. I need to think carefully. Don't make decisions too hastily. I wonder what the other Alice would do in my place? Alice Lorange, Alice D, Alice Brown?

I haven't been able to get in touch with them since the events at Adelan Alarie's house. I'm sure they are doing well, but I would like to see them again one day. Although, without the automatic translation of languages, communicating will be very difficult. It doesn't matter. One day, the four Alice's will meet again. *I know it!* I said to myself determined. *I can feel it!*

[49] In the sense of a Japanese idol (youth celebrity).

CHAPTER 17: Sacrifice ~ Unwanted Intervention.

I get out of the Rift, it disappears afterwards, and I find myself on a tropical island in the middle of a celebration. Among the people, I see baskets full of food on the ground. Being very hungry, I go to the baskets and grab a bun and an orange. I eat the whole thing and, seeing that no one is looking at me, I detransform. My magical girl outfit is replaced by my clothes. Strangely, the green fluorescent light strips are off. They come off my sweater and jeans. I will hide them under a basket. Then a woman comes to talk to me. She has long black hair and skin of the same color.

“It’s a great day! Corali’hulu will bless our island again!”

I just nod my head. I don’t want to draw attention to myself.

“I hope he likes her, otherwise his blessing will be less.”

In spite of the risks, I dare to ask her questions.

“She?”

“Shantalia, of course! The next sacrifice to the Great Corali’hulu!”

“Sa...Sacrifice ?”

“Of course! Every twenty years, Corali’hulu asks for a virgin woman as a sacrifice. In exchange, he blesses our island with his divine powers, and no misfortune befalls us!”

A virgin woman in sacrifice. With horror, it makes me think of dirty movies. Movies that I don’t watch, of course. However, I did come across an adult manga in the library, as it had been mistakenly classified with the youth manga. This manga, very hot, has as heroine Tiara, a virgin woman in her twenties and the princess of a mythical kingdom. Tiara is the prisoner of a sea monster with many tentacles and he... uh... I won’t give details, but he gets her pregnant. The tome ends with the princess preparing a plan to escape her prison under the ocean.

“Of course, I already know all that!” I said to the woman, so as not to look suspicious, although it is a lie.

The lady smiles at me and then she goes to talk to a group of women.

For my part, I explore my new environment, while opening my eyes for the appearance of a new Rift. I am in a small village, and, as it is written on a wooden sign, on the island of Ryordant. Suddenly I hear a bell ringing, and a man's voice shouts that everyone must go to the south beach for the sacrifice ceremony. To go unnoticed, I sneak among a group of girls my age. They are way too close to me, but I hold my brain by talking to me mentally. *This is no time to shout "danger" at me! Do you understand?* All the villagers are heading towards the south beach, including me.

On arriving at the beach, I see that it is crowded by all the inhabitants of the island. I take a look around. No Rift in sight. I see, in the distance, near the water, an old man in a gray toga. Near him is a brown-skinned woman wearing a white dress. *It must be Shantalia.* The old man begins to speak and, despite the fact that he is far away for many people, everyone manages to hear him, as if he had an invisible microphone. The man says that he is the Great Speaker, chosen by Corali'hulu to be his voice at the sacrifices. The Great Speaker then says that Corali'hulu will take Shantalia and the island will receive his blessing. He asks Shantalia to go to the sea, so that the Great Corali'hulu can pick her up. *I... I have to do something!* In spite of everything, I just stand there, without moving.

The woman with brown skin goes into the water while walking. While half of her body is immersed in the water, large tentacles come out of the water and grab her. I manage to do something.

“NOOOOOOOOOOOO!”

As they hear me scream, all the islanders turn to me. I don't take the time to think, or even to be afraid.

“For Shantalia, TRANSFORMATION!”

In a second, I am transformed. Seeing this metamorphosis, the Great Speaker orders my capture.

“Oh no, VENT VIOLENT!” [50]

A powerful wind starts to blow. It keeps people at a distance. Without taking any time, I run towards the sea. Being close enough to Shantalia, I launch a wind attack to free her from the tentacles by cutting them off. Surprised, the woman with brown skin falls into the water, then she comes to the surface. For his part, the Great Speaker

screams in rage.

“But what are you doing?” Shantalia shoots at me, her voice full of anger. “You’re ruining everything!”

“NO!” I said to her. “I’m saving your life!”

“Imbecile! It is my destiny...”

“To die? NO WAY!”

“No, no, no! All the sacrifices live forever in Corali’hulu’s castle under the ocean.”

Her words make me think of the adult manga with princess Tiara.

“And ... the sacrifices must make him children?” I asked Shantalia.

“Yes. He’s never succeeded so far, but with me he will...”

The woman is silent while other tentacles come out of the water. A powerful growl can be heard. “You made him angry!” exclaimed Shantalia. “Go away!”

I want to respond to her when my attack of the strong wind diminishes. A group of muscular men then try to catch me. I avoid them and, miracle!, a Rift appears. I jump into it and it closes behind me, leaving the Great Speaker speechless.

[\[50\]](#) “Violent wind”, could also mean “strong wind”, “fierce wind”.

INTERLUDE 4: The Redheaded Hacker ~ The Pain of the Past

I am Charlie Always. I watch Martia's codes scroll by while she discusses politics. Nothing abnormal in sight. She asks me if I'm not a little too young to be interested in that. I tell her that "Charlie" had told me about it, and that I wanted to know more about that. The automaton says, "I understand, Charlotte." and she continues to talk to me about politics. Also, about our beloved government.

I sigh softly. I always hated the name Charlotte. Even after becoming Charlie, "Charlotte" still haunts me. My parents, no, Charlotte's parents are still looking for their missing daughter. They have never loved me the way I am, so they are not my parents. This may sound cruel and senseless, but I deny their blood and their genes.

Charlotte no longer exists. I am Charlie now. Charlie, the contract photographer, the hacker in his spare time, and the mentor of this new generation of Rift Breakers. The only good memories I have of my time as "Charlotte" are the ones where I did my sacred duty as a Rift Breakers. That is without counting all the dead. Men, women, children, other RB.

When the HereRayda mall had been invaded by a horde of zombies, coming out of a big Rift, it was a carnage. Of course, I defeated them and destroyed the big Rift, but when it was all over, I was covered in blood. Covered in blood and surrounded by corpses. I had nightmares for years because of them. Zombies, monsters, dead people. Always having to lie, to hide, to survive, until the day my rebirth came.

Martia has stopped speaking and I ask her why. The android says I'm crying. I retort that it is impossible, that she is mistaken. Martia repeats that I am crying. Angry, I turn her off. Her eyes go out, her head leans forward, and I feel my tears streaming down my face.

I shout an insult, while my mental state seems to be falling apart. *Why?* I ask myself while suffering. *Why am I crying? Why am I SO weak? W.H.Y.???*

CHAPTER 18: Hotel ~ Koramie Alyce

I'm coming out of the Rift. It vanishes afterwards. I am now in the lobby of a scary hotel. The front door is sealed by strange dark purple roots. There is a mixture of blood and mud on the walls. A strange light veil covers my eyes. *There's a thin fog... It's too weird.*

“Hey? Anyone there?”

Nobody answers me. I go to the counter at the reception desk. There is nobody there. *There's got to be someone out there somewhere.* I go to an elevator and press a button to bring it up. The doors open and, with fright, I see the corpse of a redhead man. The body is being devoured by a creature that I cannot identify. It looks like a mixture between a man and a spider. The creature, seeing me, wants to pounce on me to kill me. Being always transformed, I don't allow it to happen.

“BOUCLIER D'AIR!” [\[51\]](#)

A magical green barrier pushes it back and the elevator doors close. *I must not stay there.* Although there is another elevator, in another corridor, I don't take any risks and I use the stairs.

As I walk up the stairs, I notice frightening changes. The walls, usually a sad gray, change color to brown tinged with red. Eyes gradually appear and then vanish, leaving behind a bloody trace. The steps, clean at first, become covered with a strange sticky and hot substance. I don't dare to touch it and hurry up to the second floor. Once there, I open a door and find myself in a corridor with rooms.

I was about to knock on a door, at random, when a door near me opened on a little girl with black skin, long brown hair and hazel eyes. The child is wearing an earring on her left ear. A large yellow stone, surrounded by decorative silver tree leaves. She looks just like an Alice I know.

“Brown? Is that you?”

“Poka na, teri?” [\[52\]](#)

“What?”

“Ama keres.” [\[53\]](#)

I don't understand her language. The child scratches her head. She seems to be thinking about something and then, after she sighs, she holds out her hand to me. Hesitantly, I take it.

“Ilio piru ka.” [\[54\]](#)

The stone of the earring lights up for a few seconds and then turns off.

“Do you understand me now?” the little girl asks me.

Surprised, I say “yes”. The child quickly withdraws her hand.

“I would have preferred not to link you to the Koramie System, but it is the only way to activate the translation of extraterrestrial languages.”

“Koramie System?”

“Yes, the Koramie System, which gives us access to our combat forms.”

“What?”

“We transform and fight alien forces that want to invade our world.”

Still not understanding, I ask the girl if she is talking about planet Earth.

“No. Our planet is called Tierika. I am Alyce Hazielle.”

“Okay... and are you alone?”

“No. The other Alyce are here. Alyce M - for Marinyova -, Alyce Letangerize and Alyce Kuriamiyo. We must find a way out of this evil dimension before Tierika is attacked again.”

I want to ask her more questions, but Hazielle tells me she doesn't have the time. She has to find her comrades in arms. Hazielle is going to take the stairs to the next floor and I am alone again.

I wonder if I shouldn't follow her when a ghostly creature crosses a wall and then, facing me, it turns into a bird-woman, with worms coming out of her flesh. *It's disgusting!* I thought before attacking her with an aerial saw. The birdwoman dodges the saw with sharp air.

“Well, as you wish, ARIA SONORE!” [\[55\]](#)

Greenish waves rip the wings off the creature and turn her into a brownish pulp. Without wasting time, I will take the stairs to the second floor.

On the second floor, I don't see Hazielle. *She had to go up to the third.* I go up to the third floor, the top floor of the hotel, and I find her in a corridor.

“Hazielle!”

“Oh, it's you.”

Next to her is a young woman with coppery skin and black hair, a blonde teenager with small blue eyes, and a redhead teenager with green eyes. The other Alyce. I can easily guess who's who. The lady is Kuriamiyo, the blonde teenager is M and the redhead teenager is Letangerize. They also have an earring, like Hazielle, but the stone has a different color. Red for Kuriamiyo, blue for M, green for Letangerize.

“Yes, I am Alice Lorange.”

“Lorange'...” said thoughtfully Letangerize. “What a strange name.”

“You're not from Tierika, are you?” asks M.

“Absolutely, but I am not an enemy.”

“No, you don't look like our opponents from other planets.” says Kuriamiyo. “How did you get here?”

I plan to tell her about the Rifts when the floor begins to vibrate and slimy creatures make their appearances.

I sigh with discouragement.

“FOUET DE BRI...!” [\[56\]](#)

My attack is interrupted by the four Alyce. They speak at the same time.

“Koramie Alyce ACTIVATION!”

The stone of their earrings shines. Lights surround their bodies and, in a flash, they are transformed. Unlike me, their uniforms remind me more of superheroes than of magical girls. The Alyce all wear a tight gray outfit with luminous lines. The color of the lines corresponds to the color of their earrings' stone. They also wear a semi-translucent

silver cape. Their earrings no longer shine.

“Let’s go!” says Letangerize to the rest of the group.

Before I can answer them, the Alyce will face the slimy creatures. Their attacks consist of punches and kicks, aerial combo - throwing the creatures into the air - and magical attacks.

As I see parallels between Letangerize and me, I wasn’t surprised to see her perform wind-type attacks. Hazielle, like Brown, has magical earth attacks. M, like D, has water attacks. As for Kuriamiyo, she has fire attacks, like Kurosawa.

As I watch them fight, I see a Rift appearing at the end of the corridor. Not wanting to lose my chance to go to another world, I call upon the strong wind to make my way. As I pass Alyce M, she asks me what is going on.

“I’m sorry, but I have to go! Good luck for your return to Tierika.”

M intends to say something back to me when I dive into the Rift. Immediately, it closes and disappears.

[51] “AIR SHIELD!”

[52] Translates as “Your name, what?”.

[53] “Not understood.”

[54] “Mental connection, now.”

[55] “SOUND ARIA!”

[56] “BREEZE WH...!”

CHAPTER 19: Forest ~ Dark Fairies

I'm coming out of the Rift. It disappears behind me. I am now in a forest. It is dark. Thanks to the lunar rays, I can see that the trees have a strange color. The trunks and branches are black, the leaves are purple. I take a few steps forward and I hear a small voice shouting.

“STOP MOVING, FILTHY LOMIYAN, SO THAT I CAN BURN YOU, IN THE NAME OF OUR QUEEN!”

Afterwards, I hear the sound of a small magical explosion. Thinking that someone is in danger, I run to the source of the noise. I arrive in front of a pink-haired, brown-eyed teenager. She has glasses. She wears a cat maid cosplay, a long black dress with a white apron, a small pink bow tie with a golden bell and cat ears in pink fabric on a headband with white fringe. She also has a ribbon in her back and a fake cat tail. A few meters away from the teenager is a little fairy dressed in black. The fairy has purple eyes, pointed ears and black hair with some red highlights. She was the one who screamed.

“But what's going on here?” I asked.

“Be careful,” says the pink-haired teenager, “she's a dark fairy.”

“A what?”

“SILENCE!” shouts the fairy dressed in black. “ALL LOMIYAN MUST DIE!”

The fairy pronounces a magic formula in a language I don't know. Balls of fire appear around her and then they hurl on me.

“BOUCLIER D'AIR!” [\[57\]](#)

The green magic barrier repels fireballs and they will explode on several trees. Fortunately, the trees do not catch fire.

“Wow!” says the teenager. “You're a magical girl.”

I don't have time to answer her that the evil fairy is beginning to conjure up more fireballs.

“Oh no, FOUET DE BRISE!” [\[58\]](#)

A magic whip attacks the fairy and propels her onto a tree, knocking

her down. The teenager in cosplay tells me to run and she runs away. Not knowing where to go, I follow her.

After a while, we stop running.

“Phew!” exclaims the teenager. “We’re safe for now.”

I ask her first name.

“Lena.” she says to me. “And you?”

I tell her my name is Alice. Lena then asks me where I am from.

“Uh... if I say ‘from another world,’ would you believe me?”

“Not really, but, at the same time, I believe in fairies. That dumbass Denis, it’s all his fault!”

I ask Lena who this Denis is. She tells me he is her boyfriend. Well, her ex-boyfriend. She broke up with him because their relationship was unhealthy. According to Lena, Denis is “a very sick guy”. She didn’t realize it at the beginning of their relationship, but Denis is obsessed with religion. He sees demons everywhere and he can’t stand seeing religious symbols in fiction. He even thinks that some video game creators are “evil demonic sons”, due to the themes covered in their creations. Lena finds this not only stupid, but downright illogical.

“Moreover, despite this, he is also obsessed with Mimi, a popular singer for the young. Since Mimi’s stage costumes are inspired by cosplays, Denis forced me to be in costume all the time. Also, to have his religious beliefs. Now you understand why I broke up with him. He wanted to control my life.”

I tell Lena that I understand, but, in this case, why is she in a cat maid cosplay?

“Oh, that? That’s just to look cool. By the way, my hair is naturally black. Anyway, you have to wonder what Denis did.”

She explains that a week after their break-up Denis went to this forest and freed Ixelda, the cursed queen, with her dark fairies. Lena had told him the legend of Ixelda, which had been sealed by a knight with a great heart, when she and her fairies wanted to kill all the Lomiyan. I conclude that this world is called Lomiya. Since that day, not only Denis has disappeared, but the dark fairies appear every night and

they kill any Lomian they can find in the forest. Lena has therefore taken the decision to stop them.

“To do this, I must find the queen Ixelda and defeat her, one way or another.”

I tell her that I am ready to help her. Lena thanks me, while being surprised that magical girls exist.

“Well, if fairies exist,” I asked Lena. “Why not magical girls?”

I was not wrong. Lena nods her head and we start walking.

Lena and I are walking through the forest. Other dark fairies try to kill us, but I manage to chase them away with my powers on the wind. There are different types of dark fairies, each fairy having control of one element. Fairies of fire, water, earth and air. The color of their hair highlights allows to identify them. We arrive in a clearing and a fairy with green streaks calls out to us.

“That’s as far as you go!” she exclaims, as she prepares an air spell.

“Do you believe that?” asks Lena.

“BRISE COUPANTE!” [\[59\]](#)

The fairy screams as her wings are cut off by my attack. Two other dark fairies, one of water with blue streaks and one of earth with yellow streaks, came to her rescue and they fled.

“Well,” says Lena, “that was easy. For you, I mean.”

I ask her where the queen Ixelda is. As if to offer me an answer, a black and purple vortex appears. A fairy the size of an adult human comes out of it. The vortex disappears behind her.

“Ixelda!” exclaims Lena on seeing her.

The cursed queen has, like her dark fairies, black hair, but her highlights are purple. She has also pointed ears and dark eyes.

“So,” said Ixelda, “it’s you two who are causing trouble to my dear fairies.”

“We are here to stop you!” retorts the teenager with pink hair.

I concentrate my wind magic in my hands.

“Come on, come on.” said the cursed queen. “This redhead can’t defeat me. By the way, are you Lena?”

“Yes, so what?”

“Denis hasn’t stopped talking about you. He was driving me crazy, with his Mimi, his religion and you!”

“This does not surprise me.” says the teenager with glasses. “He’s a real...”

“EXPLOSION D’AIR!” **[60]** I said, interrupting the conversation.

A jet of compressed and magical air spurts out of my hands. Ixelda laughs and creates a purple protection. The protection absorbs my attack.

“You see? I cannot be defeated!”

“That’s what you think, Ixelda!” says Lena. “Alice, try something else.”

I cast all the attacks I’ve used since I received my magical girl powers. Unfortunately, Ixelda manages to either avoid them or absorb them with her purple protection. The cursed queen laughs heartily. She keeps telling us that I can’t defeat her.

“No...” says Lena. “There must be a way!”

“I want to believe you,” I said, “but... By the way, where is Denis?”

“It’s not important!” replied the teenager. “It is necessary to defeat Ixelda, if not her fairies will continue to kill!”

“But...”

“If you really want to know, he is my prisoner.” says Ixelda. “After all, I had to offer a reward to the one who freed me.”

“A reward?” I asked the evil queen. “I don’t understand.”

“It’s simple, though. I wanted to make him a husband, but he’s far too crazy for that. I plan to kill him, after I’ve taken care of you two.”

Her words made Lena angry. She hates Denis, but she doesn’t want him dead. She screams at me to do something and I refrain from crying. *All this pressure... the danger of death... Stupid Other. They will never change. Always the pain...* I focus my growing anger on my magic.

“Give it up.” says Ixelda. “Your magic can’t do anything against me!”

I don’t listen to her. A large green magic sphere is forming in my hands. I scream in rage, I crush the sphere, then a big magic explosion rings out. Ixelda is pushed back by the explosion’s force and she gets stuck between the branches of a tree. Ixelda had no time to free herself that I cast a succession of aerial saws. The cursed queen screams and she gets cut into pieces.

With the death of the cursed queen, all the dark fairies lose their lives, because Lena explains to me that their souls are bound together. The teenager with glasses thanks me.

“Honestly, I would never have been able to defeat her alone. Thanks to you.”

I remain silent. I am still frustrated at her. *She didn’t have to yell at me.* Suddenly there was a purple light and a teenager in underwear appeared. When Lena saw him, she started screaming.

“DENIS! YOU DAMN MORON!”

Denis has brown hair and blue eyes. I ask him why he’s in his underpants, but he doesn’t answer me because he’s too busy taking Lena’s insults.

“MANIPULATING ME AND MAKING ME UNHAPPY WASN’T ENOUGH FOR YOU. YOU HAD TO FREE IXELDA, YOU BIG GURU JERK!”

When Denis finally decides to speak, it is to yell at Lena. He calls her crazy, heartless, demon, bitch, and so on. He says that she is the one who cheated on him for another boy and that he is innocent. He is “a poor little angel scarred by the nasty pink-haired demon”. I roll my eyes at his words. *Lena is right. This guy is very sick in the head.* After further incendiary attacks on both sides, the ex-couple continues their dispute over a story of artistic collaboration that has gone wrong. From what I understand, it is a self-published illustrated spiritual book. Denis had written the texts, Lena had drawn the images. Since Lena had helped Denis financially for this project, for correction and printing costs, she wants her money back, but Denis doesn’t want to give it back to her. Since they both ignore me, I walk away. *I don’t have to endure Others and their quarrels.*

I continue walking in the forest and a Rift appears. I take it and I find myself in a white world. Everything is white, everywhere. I feel like I’m in a world of nothingness. The Rift disappears behind me and I

wonder what to do.

[57] “AIR SHIELD!”

[58] “BREEZE WHIP!”

[59] “CUTTING BREEZE!”

[60] “AIR EXPLOSION”, could also be translated as the cooler “AIR BLAST” or even “AIR BLASTER”.

INTERLUDE 5: Pink-haired Girl ~ Stories

My name is Lena. After having had a violent argument with that idiot Denis, I went home and went to bed. The next day, after coming home from school, I started reading a novel. Our world has fascinating stories.

The story of Jesabel and Manolita, two little girls who invoked an icy spirit named Virgil to defeat Shirina. Shirina is an evil witch who wanted to plunge the world into eternal darkness.

The story of Elisa and Elian, two university students who fell in love after helping people from other worlds through ChatAid. ChatAid is software of a paranormal nature.

The story of Chiko, a virtual reality's Code Wielder (hacker). He became a prisoner in VR and he has to ally himself with artificial intelligence to return to the real world.

The story of Salieka, a young woman in love with the mysterious Taralise. Taralise is a mermaid who has changed her appearance with magic, as she is looking for Celeong, her missing sister. Her real name is Taralong. Liu, the son of a fisherman, is courting Salieka because he would like to marry her, but he too is hiding a secret. Liurei is his true identity.

The story of a group of mercenaries, the D.I.V.A., who defend their fantasy world from the forces of evil. Their most formidable enemy is Timothy, a farmer who became a necromancer after the assassination of his family. D.I.V.A. is for Diana, Iliana, Victoria and Alissa.

The story of Haley, an orphan, who embarks on a long journey and a great adventure with the strange Ivanoil, a being with no definite gender. Ivanoil seems to possess dangerous powers and they can confront creatures straight out of men's madness.

Sometimes I even wonder if all these stories are not "real" in worlds other than ours. In any case, my favorite has always been the cursed watch.

This story is about a magic watch, created by a demon. Whoever finds the watch can use it to go back in time and make a wish come true. In exchange, the user of the watch must offer his soul to the demon, and thus die after the wish has been granted. The story follows several

users of the cursed watch and they are not all Lomian. My favorite has always been Rezso, the talking wolf. He used the watch to save Russell, a little boy, from being devoured by another intelligent wolf, Valko. I also love the two sisters, Red Rose and Snow Rose, who took turns using the watch to save their parents and Savoie, a blood stopper.

After reading for several hours, I start doing my homework. I haven't seen Alice since Ixelda's defeat. *I wonder if she is well and where can she be?*

CHAPTER 20: Wish ~ Reunion

Still in the white world, I suddenly hear a voice. It says hello to me.

“Uh, hello?” I replied. “Where are you? I don’t see anything.”

“I am everywhere, I am one with this world.”

“So, are you a... a god?”

“No, I don’t believe so.”

This voice is very strange. I can’t tell if it’s male or female.

“Uh, are you a man or a woman?”

“I don’t know. Both, I think. My name is Nuri.”

“Okay, Nuri. I’m Alice.”

Nuri tells me that they haven’t had any visitors for a long time. I ask what they mean by that.

“Sometimes beings from other worlds find themselves here. I send them back to their world of origin.”

“So... can you take me back to Earth?”

“Yes, of course, but first I always grant a wish.”

“A wish? Why?”

“I don’t know why. I’ve always done that.”

“Has this world always been like this? All white and nothing else.”

“Yes... well, I don’t really know. To be honest, I don’t know much. About who I am, about my past, about this world.”

I find it very strange. I would have liked to take another Rift and continue to travel to different worlds, but it is better to return home, to Earth. I tell Nuri that I am ready to leave. They ask me for my wish.

“I don’t know what to wish for.”

I could ask for so many things: to be rich, to be a star, not to suffer

any more in front of Others... *but what I want most is...*

“I wish to be in the company of Alice Brown, Alice D, Alice Kurosawa, to be able to understand each other and to set off on an adventure!”

Nuri tells me it will be so. They say goodbye, an intense light dazzles me, and I fall unconscious.

When I come to, I see a sunny sky. I get up and I am in a park in the city of Six-Lumineal. It seems deserted. *I'm back! But where are the Alice?* Touching my left ear, I feel that I have a clip earring. It was not there before. It makes me think of the earrings of the Alyce and the Koramie System. Suddenly I hear a familiar voice calling me.

“Lorange!”

The voice of a little girl. It comes from behind me. I turn around sharply and I see Alice Brown, running towards me. Contrary to the last time I saw her, she is wearing a pale blue shirt and a brown skirt.

“Brown!”

“Oh, Lorange, how happy I am to see you! It's been a long time.”

“Yes. How long has it been since I left?”

“Since the event at Adelan Alarie's house? A month.”

“A month!”

I didn't think I had traveled so long between worlds. I spent a good week on the planet Ionas, but after that I think I did 48 hours, top. *Time on Earth must go faster.* I notice that Brown also has a clip earring on her left ear. The jewel has a big white stone. *A pearl?*

“Brown, this earring...”

“Have you noticed? We all have one. They appeared, just like that, and then we were teleported here.”

“‘We’? Are D and Kurosawa here?”

“Of course they are there!”

Brown calls the two Alice and I see them coming. Kurosawa is no longer in a kimono, but in a white shirt and black jeans. D is no longer wearing her fluorescent pink sportswear. Instead of them, she is

wearing beige pants and a red sweater.

“Lorange!” they say, after having joined us.

I am happy to see them again. As they are checking up on me, I realized that they are speaking to me in French.

“Uh, is it just me or do we all speak the same language?” I asked them.

“No, you’re not the only one.” says D. “Languages seem to translate automatically, unless you really want to say something in your mother tongue. For example, an attack in magical girl mode.”

“This seems to be caused by the earrings.” says Kurosawa. “I wonder why.”

“So, Nuri made my wish come true!” I exclaimed.

“Nuri?” Brown asks me. “Who is that?”

“It’s a long story.”

I give them a big, but still long, summary of all my journeys since the house of Adelan Alarie. The Alice can’t believe it. They have also noticed Rifts, but, contrary to the one that had appeared at my school, no creature came out of it.

“They appear and disappear without reason.” explains D. “I’ve never tried to get into one of them.”

“Neither do we.” said Kurosawa and Brown.

“But your wish also speaks of us going on an adventure.” said D. “So, what’s going to happen?”

I tell her I don’t know. Kurosawa strongly advises me to contact my family to let them know I’m okay.

“We can’t do it for our own families because we don’t have access to international calls, and I don’t think we can borrow a computer to send an email,” the Japanese Alice also explains. “But you, you must be officially missing!”

I had never thought of that when I was on Ionas and then on Medocorilia, but then again, I don’t have any friends at school. Still, there are my parents and this girl. Not Melane, but Ethel. I have to tell

them that I am still alive.

After asking the Alice to wait for me at the park, I go to a public phone booth. Someone had left some money. So, I was able to call home. When Rayelle heard my voice on the phone, she started screaming. Her voice had a mixture of joy, anger and sadness. It was as if her brain didn't know what emotion to produce. As for her words, I don't think they make any sense. I try to tell her that I'm okay, that I'm going home (one of these days) and that I would like her to tell Ethel the good news. Rayelle is deaf to my words. I sigh, hang up and go back to the park.

Once again reunited with the Alice, we are waiting for something unusual to happen. This happens quite quickly, as a colorful portal appeared. Brown asks me if it is another kind of Rift. I tell her I don't know.

"Well." says D. "What are we waiting for?"

"What do you mean by that?" asks Kurosawa.

"But come on!" exclaimed the Russian Alice. "What are we waiting for to take the portal?"

"Uh," I said. "I don't know."

"In any case, I'm going!" said the American Alice.

Brown goes into the colored portal. Her body seems to dive into it before disappearing. Kurosawa, worried for the little girl, goes in turn into the portal. D approaches it.

"So, Lorange, are you coming?"

"Yes, I'm coming!"

D enters the colored portal and I follow her. It vanishes behind my path.

This is how a great adventure will begin for us in another world. For the four Alice, autistic and magical girls!



♠♣♥♦

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